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STUDIES
IN THE
GOSPEL OF JOHN

PREPARED FOR READERS OF THE ENGLISH NEW TESTAMENT. DESIGNED FOR USE IN BIBLE CLASSES, PRAYER MEETINGS, AND PRIVATE STUDY

By

George P. Eckman, D. D.

FIRST SERIES

Chapters I–XII

THE METHODIST BOOK CONCERN
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To My Wife

Our English speech was first enriched by a version of John's Gospel in a very memorable fashion. The Venerable Bede, a learned monk of Jarrow, on the banks of the Tyne, in the concluding days of his devoted life, translated this wonderful book into the Anglo-Saxon tongue. As his last hour was approaching, the amanuensis to whom he was dictating exclaimed, "There remains now only one chapter, but it seems difficult for you to speak." "It is easy," replied Bede. "Take your pen, dip it in ink, and write as fast as you can." After putting down the sentences as they fell from his trembling lips, the scribe said, "Now, master, only one sentence is wanting." Bede repeated it. "It is finished!" said the writer. "It is finished," repeated the dying saint. "Lift up my head; let me sit in my cell, in the place where I have been accustomed to pray; and now glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost." And with this noble utterance his spirit fled.

INTRODUCTORY

This little book is simply the outgrowth of its author's work with his own people during a few happy and profitable months. For nearly a year he accompanied them in an analytical, expository, and devotional study of John's Gospel. The outlines of the first portion of this work are herewith presented, and the rest will probably appear in the near future. The weekly prayer-meetings were employed as the most available services in which the congregation could engage in this study. Free discussion was encouraged after the pastor had opened the theme of the evening. Prayer, song, and personal witness contributed those devotional elements which are essential to a wholesome mid-week service. The meeting always had a definite object, and the lifelessness which is the bane of the improvised service never manifested its depressing influence. The only embarrassment was the difficulty of limiting the meeting in time. Meanwhile the pastor found an inexhaustible mine of pulpit material for his Sunday ministrations, and the people who pursued the study with attention secured a knowledge of the Fourth Gospel which could not fail to deepen their intelligence and enrich their spiritual experience. They were urged to commit to memory large portions of the book, and these were frequently recited in unison at the beginning of the service.

They were asked to acquire a knowledge of the entire contents of the Gospel, and to be able to present a correct outline of all the movements in the book. As the study advanced there were occasional reviews of the subject-matter. To facilitate the work a syllabus was printed and distributed to those who were willing to use it. The good effects of what was thus done by one company led the author to believe that other assemblies of Christians might reap equally profitable results from a similar course. Moreover, Bible classes in connection with the Sunday-school, and individuals engaged in private study, could pursue with advantage the method herein indicated. As the International Sunday-school Lessons for 1908 will cover the Gospel of John, there is a certain timeliness in this volume. The author hopes it may be found helpful.

William Wordsworth in one of his smaller poems recites the story of a famous artist whom an old monk was showing through the convent where the traveler may see Titian's "Last Supper." As they studied together the figures of that noble painting, the venerable friar remarked that as often as he reflected upon the changes constantly occurring about him, he was impressed that the persons in that immortal group had actually an abiding place in the world, while he and his fellows were but passing phantoms. "They are in truth the substance, we the shadows."

The student of the Gospel of John is similarly affected, after he has continued awhile in the goodly fellowship of the persons who move about in this wonderful composition. The vitality of the book is amazing. The individuality of the figures it portrays is marked

with marvelous distinctness. The central Person, to whom thought is always directed, and for whom light is flashed upon every sentence, stands out from the pages of this Gospel with greater clearness and beauty than from any other piece of literature in the world. The Apostles whom He gathered about Him are drawn with convincing fidelity to nature. The author, while desiring only to exalt his Master, reveals his own character in unmistakable lines. The book is redolent of the spirit of Christ. It is one of the profoundest works known to men, yet it charms the humblest minds. It is the choicest book for devotional reading which the New Testament contains, yet the theologian will never get to the bottom of it. A thorough acquaintance with this Gospel is a liberal education in the "things which a Christian ought to know and believe to his soul's health." To fill one's mind with its language and one's heart with its spirit is to insure a noble and effective life.

Frederick Dennison Maurice was often discovered by those who came suddenly into his study rising hurriedly from his knees, his face overspread with a ruddy glow, and bearing the marks of having been pressed by his hands. The Greek Testament would be found open at some point which had impressed him the moment he had knelt at his chair, and there would be in his countenance just a hint of sadness—almost of reproach—that his spirit should be called away from the intercourse it had been enjoying.

The student of John's Gospel will require deep meditation and earnest prayer in order to obtain the highest advantage from his perusal of this sublime production. It is incredible that a profane mind should understand

its spiritual depths. The Holy Spirit who inspired its author alone can avail to interpret his meaning. Commentaries and dissertations on the Fourth Gospel are very numerous. The student will have no difficulty in finding anything he desires, from the most scholarly and critical to the most devotional and homiletic. The literature on the subject is very prolific, and this is a proof of the inexhaustible vitality of John's work. The Epistles of our author, as well as the Apocalypse, must not be overlooked as works calculated to assist the student in interpreting his Gospel. But "the mind of Christ" will be required above all the intellectual aids which thoughtful men have provided.

This volume contains twenty-six analytical "Studies," accompanied in each case by a set of "Personal Questions" designed to apply certain lessons of the passage under consideration to the individual heart. A hymn taken from the new Methodist Hymnal is also suggested as an appropriate poetic phrasing of the central truth of the portion studied. The homilies which follow are intended further to illustrate the themes. They usually treat some feature of the passage which has not been particularly emphasized in the analysis. The writer is painfully conscious of the incompleteness and defectiveness of his work, but humbly trusts that what he has done may be blessed of God to the profit of those who are patient enough to read his book.

Studies in the Gospel of John.

I.

THE AUTHOR.

The son of thunder, the loved of Christ, the pillar of the Churches, who leaned on Jesus' bosom, makes his entrance. He plays no drama, he covers his head with no mask. Yet he wears array of inimitable beauty. For he comes having his feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, and his loins girt, not with fleece dyed in purple, or bedropped with gold, but woven through and through with, and composed of, truth itself. He will now appear before us. . . . Wherefore, as if we all at once saw one stooping down from yonder heaven, and promising to tell us truly of things there, we should all flock to listen to him, so let us now dispose ourselves. For it is from up there that this man speaks down to us. . . . Seest thou the boldness, and the great authority of his words! How he utters nothing by way of doubtful conjecture, but all demonstratively, as if passing sentence! Very lofty is this apostle, and full of dogmas, and lingers over them more than over other things.—*Chrysostom.*

Introduction.—The question of authorship in dispute with special intensity since the eighteenth century. Doubt thrown upon it almost from the beginning. The problem has large importance in determining the value of the book. Some contend that this Gospel would not be impaired by admitting the uncertainty of its authorship. This view is not justified. "The discourses put into the mouth of Jesus, and the conception of His person which is set forth in this book, have for the Church an altogether different value, according as it is the beloved apostle of the Lord who gives us an account of what he

has seen and heard, or a thinker of the second century who composes all this after his own fancy."—*Godet.* The truth of this assertion is obvious when one observes the essential relation of the contents of the Fourth Gospel to the individuality of the writer, who repeatedly affirms that he is offering personal testimony, in which at the same time he is presenting objective truth. "If the writer was the beloved disciple, an eye-witness possessing a specially intimate knowledge of the mind and character of Jesus, we have an assurance that when, for example, he wrote the opening sentences of the Gospel, he felt himself in touch not merely with current theological thought, but with the historic fact of the consciousness of Jesus of Nazareth."—*Strachan.*

I. EVIDENCES OF JOHN'S AUTHORSHIP.

Here it is only possible to give these evidences in outline. Detailed statements of them are easily available in many works on the Gospel of John.

1. **External Evidence.** Accepted by the Church universal as John's in the last third of the second century. These early Christians had more evidence than has reached us. Among the documents ascribing this Gospel to John is the *Muratorian Fragment,* containtaining the earliest known list of books esteemed canonical (A. D. 150-175). The testimony of Theophilus of Antioch (about 180), Clement of Alexandria (190), Irenæus (173-190) is directly in support of the authorship of John. Much importance is attached to the testimony of Irenæus because he was the disciple of Polycarp, who suffered martyrdom at eighty-six years of age (A. D. 155 or 156), and who used to refer to "the intercourse he had with John and the rest who had seen the Lord." It is presumed that if Polycarp had doubted the authorship of this Gospel, which was widely circulated at the time, he would have so expressed himself, and Irenæus, his pupil, would not have taught that John composed it. The works of Justin Martyr (140-

161), Tertullian (born about 160), Tatian (150-180), and other early writers contain quotations from the Gospel, and evidently assume the authorship of John without question. For full and illuminating discussion of this problem, and also for internal evidence as indicated below, see *Sanday, Criticism of the Fourth Gospel; Hastings, Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels, Vol. I.; Drummond, Character and Authorship of the Fourth Gospel,* and various *Introductions.*

2. **Internal Evidence.** Many scholars are agreed that the author must have been—

(1) *A Jew,* because of his familiarity with Jewish conceptions, points of view, opinions, usages, observances imagery; and also because the arrangement of ideas, structure of sentences, and even the vocabulary of the book are essentially Hebrew.

(2) *A Jew of Palestine,* because of his intimate acquaintance with the topography of Palestine, and especially of Jerusalem, which was destroyed long before this book appeared. Also shows close knowledge of the historical circumstances of Palestine in the time of Jesus.

(3) *A contemporary of Jesus and an eye-witness of His deeds,* because he relates these with a vividness and circumstantial precision impossible of invention. Moreover, the author claims to have witnessed what he records. (John i, 14; xix, 35.)

(4) *An apostle,* because he knows the thoughts of the disciples, and discloses motives, which no writer of fiction would have ascribed to them. He also records the emotions, thoughts, and motives of Jesus.

(5) *The Apostle John,* because he alone fulfills the requirements of such intimate knowledge of Jesus and His disciples as the author of this book unquestionably had. The writer declares that he is "the disciple whom Jesus loved," to whom Jesus entrusted His mother, and this was none other than John the Evangelist.

II. THE BIOGRAPHY OF JOHN.

1. **Date and place of birth unknown.** Probably younger than Jesus and the youngest of the disciples. Native of Galilee, lived on the shores of Gennesaret, probably at Bethsaida, though possibly at Capernaum, which was near. The character of the region in the time of Jesus contrasted with present conditions.

2. **Family,** composed of four persons, Zebedee the father, Salome the mother, James the brother, and John. Was Salome the sister of Mary the mother of Jesus? Family in comfortable circumstances. According to Mark i, 20, Zebedee had "hired servants." Salome was among those who ministered to Jesus and the disciples, and accompanied them. (Luke viii, 3; Matt. xxvii, 56.) John evidently had a house of his own. (John xix, 27), into which he received the mother of Jesus after the crucifixion. The business of fishing was lucrative. John and James were partners of Simon. (Luke v, 10.)

3. **John's first appearance.** Attracted southward from Galilee to the ministry of John the Baptist, becomes his disciple. Jesus finds him in John's company. (John i, 35.) Follows Jesus, and with Andrew is invited to the place where Jesus is staying. Andrew summons Peter, and John calls James. (John i, 37-42.)

4. **John's final call to discipleship.** Remained awhile in intercourse with Jesus, who then apparently sends the young men back to their families. John while pursuing his accustomed occupation on the Sea of Galilee is later near Capernaum called to permanent discipleship. (Matt. iv, 18-22, and parallel passages.)

5. **Appointment to the apostleship.** When the disciples became more numerous Jesus chose twelve who were to be apostles. (Luke vi, 12-16; Mark iii, 13, 14.) John stood in the front rank of these.

6. **The inner circle of three.** Peter, James, and John are in an especial sense the confidential friends of Jesus. They alone are admitted to the raising of the ruler's daughter, to the glories of the transfiguration, to the agonizing struggle in Gethsemane.

7. **The disciple whom Jesus loved.** (John xiii, 23; xix, 26; xx, 2; xxi, 7, 20.) This designation the Church fathers recognized, and John claimed. "To disguise his own name under this paraphrase was not to glorify the man; it was to exalt the tenderness of Him who had deigned to stoop so low."—*Godet.* Compare Paul's designation of himself in 2 Cor. xii, 2-5. Perhaps this title was given to John by others before he used it himself. Its propriety is apparent when it is remembered that he uses it almost apologetically, as an explanation of the prominent part he played on several important occasions.

8. **His history associated with that of Jesus until the Ascension.** Always with his Master. The confidential one at the last supper. Follows Jesus to judgment and death. The one apostle who dared to stand beside the cross, and received the mother of Jesus as a farewell charge. (John xviii, 15; xix, 26, 27.) Is at the tomb with Peter on Easter morning. With him in Galilee resuming the old calling, figures conspicuously in the closing episode of this gospel (xxi).

9. **Authentic history after Pentecost.** Fills a position secondary to that of Peter, though usually associated with him. Illustration in Acts iii, 4. Accompanies Peter to Samaria to finish the work begun by Philip. (Acts viii.) On his return to Jerusalem it is uncertain whither he goes. Not there when Paul first visited the city. (Gal. i, 18, 19.) Supposed by some that during this period he was caring for the mother of Jesus, perhaps in his own home. This would explain, it is said, the small part he took in the earliest missionary work of the Church. The Virgin pre-

sumed to have died about 48 A. D., after which John probably assumed a larger share in directing the Christian movement. Twelve or fifteen years after the return from Samaria, and shortly after the supposed date of Mary's death, he was at the Council of Jerusalem, A. D. 50 or 51. (Acts xv.) He is one of the apostles with whom Paul confers, and is ranked by him as one of "the pillars of the Church." (Gal. ii, 9.) How long he remained in Jerusalem and why he left are unknown. The New Testament gives no further information concerning him, except what he records of himself in Rev. i, 9, that he was "in the island called Patmos for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus."

10. **Later traditions.** After the Council of Jerusalem John disappears from view until the time when tradition describes him as fulfilling his apostleship among the Churches of Asia Minor. Probably did not go thither until after the destruction of Jerusalem. Persecution following the martyrdom of Stephen would lessen John's attachment to the city. Doubtless accompanied the Christians emigrating to Perea when the war against the Romans broke out. This departure occurred in 67. At a later period, in consequence of the death of Paul and others, John removed to Asia Minor to assist the Churches thus bereaved. Here was now the heart of Christendom. It was natural that he should establish himself in this territory. It has been suggested that he went to the Parthians when he left Jerusalem, and there is a tradition, supported by Tertullian, that he was at Rome, where he was miraculously preserved from death when placed in a cauldron of boiling oil, but there is no foundation for these assumptions. There is trustworthy evidence, however, of his appearance in Asia Minor and of his residence at Ephesus. Irenæus testifies that he lived there until the time of Trajan. Tradition has it that during some persecutions he was exiled to the island of Patmos. That he was there his own words declare. (Rev. i, 9.)

Domitian is said to have been the Emperor by whom John was banished. This accords with the fact that under this sovereign men were actually exiled for the mere crime of being Christians. Clement, of Alexandria, says that after the death of Domitian, John returned from Patmos to Ephesus, and says of his later years in Asia Minor: "He visited the Churches, instituted bishops and regulated affairs."

11. **The end of his life.** Attained a great age. Jerome says he died about the year 100. Irenæus asserts that he lived until the time of Trajan, that is, until after the year 98. According to Suidas he reached the age of 120 years, which is improbable. If, as has been supposed, he was from 20 to 25 years old when called by Jesus, about the year 30, he was from 90 to 95, about the year 100, three years after the accession of Trajan.

12. **His death.** The idea had been conceived that he would be exempt from death because of what Jesus had said to Peter. (John xxi, 22.) Even his death did not cause this expectation to cease. Tradition that his grave at Ephesus, where Polycrates says he was buried, gave evidence that its occupant was still living, the earth being gently moved by his breathing. Some have even insisted that he was taken up to heaven after the manner of Enoch and Elijah. Tradition, supported by the testimony of Origen, avers that he suffered martyrdom.

III. THE CHARACTER AND WORK OF JOHN.

1. **Warmth of affection and clearness of intuition,** his leading characteristics morally and intellectually. These would inspire close attachment to Jesus. His loving and sympathetic disposition has been emphasized by artists and writers. But he was a man of force as well as gentleness. Capable of intense moral indignation. Tender love and fierce intolerance blended in his character. Hated evil as fervently as he loved righteousness. With him sin was

not weakness, but wickedness. Ardor in thought, word, love, and hate—this marks the beloved disciple. Sometimes expressed in action that called for rebuke. As knowledge of Christ and the spirit of the gospel deepened, this became less and less frequent.

2. **Intensity of nature leads to excesses.** Three illustrations: (1) Forbids the stranger to cast out devils. (Mark ix, 38; Luke ix, 49.) (2) Wants to call down fire on the Samaritan villagers because of their inhospitable treatment of Jesus. (Luke ix, 54.) (3) Salome as mouthpiece for her sons, John and James, who share her desires, begs Christ to assign them chief places in His kingdom. (Matt. xx, 20; Mark x, 35.)

3. **His work.** Contrasted with that of Peter and Paul. Peter had practical, organizing ability. Paul possessed argumentative, dialectic skill. John differs from both. Could not have laid foundations like Peter, nor contended like Paul. But in closing period of the Apostolic age he contributed immensely toward completing the development of the primitive Church.

4. **His writings.** Three epistles bear his name. He is the author of the Apocalypse. These works—together with the gospel—reveal the man. John finds in Jesus the center of thought. His is an unique mind. He is unlike any of the other apostles. He is a man of vision. He broods over the facts on which he has fastened attention, and then soars into heights of inspiring thought. The other evangelists had the same deeds of Christ before them, and they record many of them. They do nothing more. John chooses a few of these events which are best adapted in his view to serve his purpose, which is to influence men to believe in Christ. These he penetrates with his wonderful insight, and from them presents a picture of the Master which is the most satisfactory, as it is undoubtedly the most accurate, of all the

portraits made by the contemporaries of Jesus. In doing this he unconsciously draws a picture of himself, in which ones sees reflected the image of the Lord.

Hymn No. 368.

O that I could, with favored John,
Recline my weary head upon
The dear Redeemer's breast!
From care, and sin, and sorrow free,
Give me, O Lord, to find in Thee
My everlasting rest!

—*Charles Wesley.*

Personal Questions:

1. Am I such a disciple as Jesus can love?
2. Is my zeal for religion pure devotion to Him?
3. Am I an apostle as well as a disciple?

The Beloved Disciple.

"That disciple whom Jesus loved."—JOHN xxi, 7.

Lord Brooke directed that his tomb should be inscribed with the words, "Friend to Sir Philip Sidney." John the Evangelist claimed for himself the rarer distinction of "That disciple whom Jesus loved." His fame would have been secure if he had rested it solely upon his writings, for it is plain that only the most gifted mind could have produced them. But the beautiful title which he appropriated to himself is a chaplet of unfading glory. Seneca once told a courtier that he had no reason to mourn for the loss of his son or anything else, since Cæsar was his friend. John esteemed his confidential relations with Jesus recompense enough for the sacrifice of a lifetime.

Napoleon Bonaparte, with his own hands, placed the

imperial crown upon his head, not even suffering the pope to do it for him. John with his own pen affixed this noble designation to himself, though we may assume that it was conceded to him as his right by the other disciples. Indeed, it may have been assigned to him by his comrades long before he ventured to apply it to himself. In any case it is a modest periphrasis to avoid the undue use of the pronoun of the first person by one who was constantly describing events of which he was an eye-witness. It denotes diffidence rather than arrogance. It clearly shows John's consciousness of the amazing condescension of Jesus in admitting him to the secret sanctuary of His personal affection. Moreover, it enables him to explain how he could know the motives, emotions, thoughts, and impulses of Jesus so familiarly. Often he reveals acquaintance with the inmost mind of Jesus. The mystery of his possessing this knowledge is solved when it is known that he is "that disciple whom Jesus loved."

What matters it how the title came to him, if it is justified by the recognized relations of John to Jesus? Was not he of the sacred triumvirate who witnessed the most divine acts of Jesus? Did not he behold the celestial splendors of the Transfiguration? Did not he enter the shadows of Gethsemane with the Master? Did not he recline on the bosom of Jesus at the Last Supper? Did not Jesus show him marks of unusual considerateness and affection at the interview by the lakeside after the resurrection? Above all, did not the Master commit His own mother to the care of John, as He turned His dying glance upon the weeping group around the Cross? Could there be any higher token of confidence and love?

It is written of Jesus by John himself that, "having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them to the end," or "to the uttermost"—every one of them. Yet He left the impression on John that there was one disciple whom He loved more fondly than any other. Could John be deceived? Could the Lord who loved all

men enough to die for them have a stronger passion for one than for another? Let the mother who has many children answer—not in public, but in the silence of her soul. What a miracle is wrapped up in that word "love!" What an infinity of power in it! What a variety of expression without conflict! A man loves his mother, his wife, his child, his country, his God—each of them with all his heart, yet differently in every instance, and without competition or rivalry, and one of them more than all. It is the supreme paradox of life. Jesus illustrated it in His relation to John. When Jonathan Edwards was dying he bade farewell to his friends and family who were about his bedside, and then said, "Now, where is Jesus of Nazareth, my true and never failing friend?" He did not love his household less; he loved his Savior more.

Did Jesus love Judas Iscariot? There can be no doubt of it. It was He who said, "Love your enemies." He did not say, "*Like* your enemies." He never commands impossibilities. There are two words in the New Testament for "love." One of them denotes that exalted spiritual passion which Paul celebrates in the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians. It is this term which Jesus uses when He bids us love our enemies. There is another word which is warmer, but less exalted. It expresses more precisely a natural affection based on instinctive affinities. Jesus could employ both of these terms with John. He could use only one of them with Judas Iscariot. He loved the latter, but He did not *like* him.

A friend said of Thoreau: "I love Henry, but I can not like him; and as for taking his arm, I should as soon think of taking the arm of an elm-tree." The devout Christian realizes that he must love every soul of man, or prove false to his religion. He knows also that he can not like those persons who are foreign to his spirit. Jesus loved John in all the ways it is possible for us to conceive of love subsisting between two holy men.

There was a certain refinement of mind and spirit in John which commanded the love of Jesus. This is evinced in his writings. It is a blunder to speak of John as "a rude fisherman." He possessed an unusually quick intelligence. We have had learned blacksmiths, like Elihu Burritt, who acquired an almost incredible number of languages while laboring at his forge; scholarly shoemakers, like Samuel Drew, who produced two notable books on profound subjects while he was engaged at the cobbler's bench, and was honored with a degree from a great university; erudite artisans in many fields of inquiry. There is no reason to suppose a fisherman in Galilee must needs be intellectually deficient. John certainly had a mind of marvelous acuteness. The other disciples saw the outer vesture of Christ's life; He looked through the events into the heart of things. He was an idealist. He was a mystic. He was a poet. He had vision. He describes what he beheld as no other apostle could do.

Deep intellectual insight was united to a beautiful delicacy of sentiment in his composition. The very use of the phrase by which he characterizes himself—"that disciple whom Jesus loved"—is proof of it. He was a man of candor, warmth, feeling, affection. A lovable man was he. His contemplative spirit, his meditative habit, his far-seeing mind would inevitably captivate the supreme intellect in history. His sweet brotherliness, his genius for comradeship, his power to creep into every fold of a friend's nature would charm the greatest heart in the world. Jesus loved him by the compulsion of the man's character.

There was a certain ardor of temperament in John which drew him to Jesus. He must not be conceived as a soft, unduly gentle, almost effeminate man. The artists have wronged him in this respect. Who told them that love belongs only to the weak? John was a virile, muscular, warm-blooded saint. Indeed, he seems like no saint at all when we remember how he forbade a man to cast out devils because he did not train in Christ's com-

pany, how he yearned to call down fire from heaven on the Samaritans who would not entertain Jesus, and how he readily acquiesced in his mother's ambitious request that her sons should have the best places in the new kingdom. But all this reveals a nature of intensity, and gives reasonableness to the term applied to John and James—Boanerges, "Sons of Thunder."

Tradition has it that, long after John had become the greatest figure in the Christian Church of Asia Minor, going one day to bathe at Ephesus, and finding Cerinthus, the heretic, within, he rushed out without bathing, crying: "Let us flee, lest even the bath-house fall upon us, for Cerinthus, the enemy of the truth, is within." The story may be fictitious, but it harmonizes with John's known hatred of falsehood, and with his ardor of soul, and shows him to have been anything but a bloodless man.

One day when he was preaching in a certain town near Ephesus he was attracted by the appearance of a young man in his audience, and on his departure particularly recommended him to the bishop of the place, who took him home and trained him for baptism. Later the youth fell into evil practices and finally renounced his faith, and became the captain of a band of robbers. When John returned to the town and asked, "Where is the pledge entrusted to you by Christ and me?" the bishop replied, "He is dead—dead to God," and rehearsed the sad story of his fall. Then the apostle obtained a horse, and set off for the headquarters of the bandits. He was captured by one of the robbers, and carried to their captain, who recognizing his prisoner was about to flee. But John held him, reasoned with him, prayed with him, and finally brought the prodigal to penitence and renewed fellowship with the Church. Such an evangelist must have had an enthusiastic nature.

This would endear him to Jesus, whose own enthusiasm was so consuming that it constrained him to work without food or rest, until his own kinsmen declared he was beside himself. It is well to remember that if we desire the special favor of Jesus we must be earnestness personified.

Another element in John's character which doubtless made him attractive to Jesus was his ability to understand the Master and to sympathize with His point of view. Peter was always blundering. Thomas was always doubting. Philip was always questioning. The majority were painfully obtuse. But John appears to have understood the Lord with singular sagacity. He was deeply drawn to the ideals of Jesus. He gravitated naturally to the Master's position.

Says Stalker: "Of two friends of Alexander the Great the historian Plutarch calls one Philo-Basileus—that is, the friend of the king; and the other Philo-Alexandros—that is, the friend of Alexander. Similarly some one has said St. Peter was Philo-Christos, the friend of the Christ; but St. John was Philo-Jesus, the friend of Jesus. This touches the quick: Peter was attached to the person who filled the office of Messiah, John to the person Himself. And this is a distinction which marks different types of Christian piety in all ages." We know that John was devoted to Jesus because he loved Him as a man, but we also know that John was mastered by the conviction that Jesus was the Son of God, a fact that very slowly penetrated the minds of the other disciples. We all feel an affection for any one who understands us in a world where misrepresentation flourishes, and John's sympathetic appreciation of Jesus was very grateful to the Master. This, too, will account for the steadfastness of John, who showed greater loyalty to Jesus than any other disciple; for when all had forsaken Him and fled, John recovered immediately from panic, and hastened after his Lord to the palace of the high priest, and passed within before the gate was shut. It is a fair presumption from the narrative that in all the subsequent events of the Master's experience up to the moment of His death John was at hand, and we know how early he came to the tomb of Christ on the day of resurrection. Well sings Emerson:

"A ruddy drop of manly blood
The surging sea outweighs,
The world uncertain comes and goes;
The lover rooted stays.

PROPERTY OF
THE CHURCH ON THE WAY

John responded to Jesus as no other apostle seems to have done. He was what Christ made him. He discerned what Jesus was always trying to teach His disciples—that love is the essence of religion. John is the only evangelist who records that final series of discourses in which Jesus repeatedly emphasizes the necessity for His followers to love one another. In his first Epistle, which is a kind of guide-book to his Gospel, he brings out the office of love with remarkable clearness. So fully did he enter into the mind of Jesus in this respect, and in other particulars of his teaching, that the reader of his Gospel is often puzzled to know whether John is recording the words of Jesus, or speaking in his own language.

Jerome's familiar story is to the point. Toward the very end of the apostle's life, when he was so infirm that he had to be carried to the church, and was too weak to preach, he would content himself with simply saying, "Little children, love one another." And when his auditors would inquire, "Master, why dost thou always say this?" he would reply, "It is the Lord's command, and if this alone is done it is enough."

Aristotle being asked what is a friend, replied, "One soul in two bodies." As nearly as one human being can absorb and express another, John became the *alter ego* of Jesus. Love has been called a species of self-flattery, because we love those persons who in some inscrutable way reflect our own souls. We may reverently say that Jesus fondly cherished John because in him, as in a mirror, he saw his own image reproduced.

Giotto has delineated St. John in a notable fresco at Padua. "The form of the ascending saint is made visible through a reticulation of rays of light in colors as splendid as ever came from mortal pencil; but the rays issue entirely from the Savior, whose face and form are full before him." It is a faithful portrait of "that disciple whom Jesus loved."

II.

THE GOSPEL.

That little book is a still deeper sea, in which the sun and stars are mirrored, and if there are eternal truths (and such there are) for the human race, they are found in the Gospel of John.—*Herder.*

1. **Its greatness as a composition.** Sometimes called the "Gospel of Eternity." Also the "Gospel of Love." So important to the Christian faith that it has been the object of constant assault by those who seek the overthrow of evangelical religion. Its importance can scarcely be overstated, though it may be *incorrectly* stated. When Lessing declares that, by teaching a loftier conception of the person of Christ than had hitherto been held, John saved Christianity, which without his help would have disappeared as a Jewish sect, he ignores the fact that Paul had completed his mission to the Gentiles before the publication of the Fourth Gospel, and that in Ephesus, where it was produced, the Pauline conception of the person of Christ, which is not less lofty than the Johannine, had already attained a central position in the tenets of the Christian Church.

2. **The problem of John's ability to write it.** How could a fisherman of Galilee acquire such profound wisdom as this work exhibits? Consider that this book has endured nearly two thousand years, and seems more valuable now than ever. (1) Too much stress must not be placed on the declaration in Acts iv, 13, that Peter and John were "unlearned and ignorant men," a phrase which serves chiefly to mark their separation from the professionally learned

classes. There was no incompatibility between the position of a hand-worker and the possession of a fair measure of Hebrew culture. Moreover, (2) John is an example of native genius. History full of such instances: Bunyan, Shakespeare, Lincoln, the early Greek philosophers, whose intellectual powers were unaided by scientific appliances and modern opportunities for investigation. (3) John's mind brought into intimate contact with the mind of Jesus. The greatest intellect of the race would inflame the soul of a thinker like John through the mere power of association. (4) The added fact of divine inspiration for a great purpose. Consider illustrations of this in the Old Testament, including that of Bezaleel. (Exod. xxxi, 2-5.)

3. **Where and when written.** At Ephesus, in Asia Minor, as seems certain. Long after the other gospels had appeared. Some time before A. D. 125, because Basileides, who quotes it, wrote about that date. Somewhere between 80 and 95 A. D. scholars agree. When the writer had reached maturity. If at an earlier period, would have been a different book in form and essence. The author is evidently an old man looking back. (vii, 39; xxi, 19.) Shows a marked development of doctrine, when compared with the other gospels. Has been conjectured that the first twenty chapters were written some time before the gospel was published, the last chapter being added at a later period, and the whole then given to the Church. The ripe fruit of long thought. Evidence that it is an old man's book in the particularity with which small things are noticed. Illustrations: descriptions of the Wedding at Cana, the Draught of Fishes, the Feeding of Five Thousand.

4. **Occasion of its composition.** Evidence to show that the gospel was written at the request of disciples and elders in Asia Minor, perhaps to preserve in permanent form John's oral gospel delivered in their hearing from time to time. This supposition confirmed

by the testimony of the *Muratorian Fragment*, Clement of Alexandria, Jerome, and others. Eusebius says: "The apostle being urged, it is said, by his friends, wrote the things which the first evangelists had omitted." Possibly the differences between John's oral gospel and the records of the other evangelists led to this request.

5. **Aims of the Gospel.** Several have been suggested: (1) Instruction of the Church. Historical and practical, as intimated by the *Muratorian Fragment*, which declares that John related the narrative; the other apostles present reviewed, criticised, revised. (2) To supplement the accounts of the other evangelists. So Eusebius asserts. This illustrated by the following facts: John devotes himself largely to the Judæan ministry, the other writers confining themselves almost wholly to the work in Galilee; John commemorates the interviews of Jesus with individuals, the others describe more fully His life in public; John deals with the spiritual import of Christ's life, the others attend more largely to the external features of His career. It is from John that we learn that the public ministry of Jesus lasted three years, whereas from the Synoptists we should have inferred that it covered but one year. (3) To refute heretical teachings. This is the claim of Irenæus and Jerome. He lived in a region infested with false teachers. Doubtless his righteous soul was vexed. (4) To confirm and strengthen the faith of the Church in the Messiahship and Divinity of Jesus Christ. Apparently intended first for believers, who required to be enriched and developed. But also adapted to convince both Jews and Gentiles, who were open-minded. (5) To bring men to eternal life. This is the supreme aim, as declared by John himself. "These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name." (John xx, 31.) In pursuance of this object he did

write a life of Christ from one point of view; he did supplement the Synoptists, though this was not his main purpose; he did refute errors, though this was not his chief aim; he wrote to convince, from his own experience and observation, that Jesus is the Christ of God, and that faith in Him brings eternal life.

6. **Characteristics of the Gospel.** In accomplishing this purpose John pursues an eclectic method. He chooses those facts in Christ's life, and employs those sayings of the Master which he believes are best calculated to serve his end. (1) **Omissions.** Does not avail himself of all the materials at his disposal. "Many other signs truly did Jesus . . . but these are written," etc. (John xx, 30, 31.) No parables, unless the allegories of the good shepherd and the vine can be so regarded. No genealogy, infancy, youth, or anything in the first thirty years of our Lord's life. Baptism, temptation, transfiguration omitted. Sermon on the Mount, Lord's Prayer, Lord's Supper, agony in Gethsemane, ascension not mentioned. No proverbs, or stories about children, scribes, lepers, demons, publicans. (2) **Additions.** Certain striking incidents: wedding at Cana, interviews with Nicodemus and the woman of Samaria, healing the nobleman's son and the man born blind, raising of Lazarus; certain wonderful discourses such as that on the bread of life, the farewell addresses, the priestly prayer on the last night. (3) **Arrangement of matter.** Announces his theme in the prologue (i, 1-18) and proceeds to use his materials with this scheme in constant view. Scenes from the life of Christ are produced in order to lead to a cumulative effect in the end, similar to that in the experience of Thomas, who cries at last, "My Lord and my God!" Shows final results in belief or unbelief, according as men accept or reject Him. (4) **Artistic elements.** Fine literary form. Great variety. "Alternation of incident and interlude, of

story and sermon, of action and discourse." A rare balancing of incidents. Examples: the wedding at Cana — lightsome and festive — over against the cleansing of the temple—stern and dark; the conversation with Nicodemus—a reputable man, at night, over against the conversation with the Samaritan woman—a disreputable person, at full noonday. By reason of this skill the interest never flags. **(5) Dramatic movement.** The catastrophe intimated at the beginning. "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." (John i, 11.) Plot develops slowly, but surely. Action confined chiefly to Judæa, and much of it to the doomed city of Jerusalem. Clouds continue to gather until the storm breaks. Twofold climax: Belief develops into conviction of Christ's divinty; unbelief ripens into murder. **(6) Portrait of Jesus.** Presents the Lord as He appeared to him. Wishes others to see Him in the same fashion. Does not write a detailed biography. Others have attempted this with varied success. He will let Jesus talk and act for Himself. A divine beauty thus irradiated from the narratives. The unbroken union of Christ with His Father displayed in his gospel. "The heavenly element which forms the *background* of the first three gospels is the *atmosphere* of the fourth."—*Plummer.* Hence a much larger proportion of the words of Christ in this gospel. Discourses play a very important part, especially in the latter half. In John's work the difference between a photograph and a portrait is well illustrated. **(7) The theologian's gospel.** John not so much the missionary, though he was an ardent evangelist, nor the expositor of prophecy, though he was doubtless an earnest and effective preacher; but he was essentially a theologian, mastering the secrets of the higher life, and seeking to destroy error by building up the truth. **(8) A book of devotion.** The more it is read the more deeply it will be cherished by the devout Christian, for it reveals what it contains—the mind of the Lord.

7. **Plan of the Gospel.** A truly philosophical work. The product of long reflection under the influence of the Holy Spirit. The character and words of Jesus are given with a single purpose. From beginning to end the manifestation of Christ's divine glory is portrayed, and the results of these several displays are indicated in increasing belief on the part of Christ's disciples, and increasing unbelief on the part of Christ's enemies. The plan coheres about this central theme—the exhibition of Christ's glory; the demonstration of Christ's divinity.

General Outline.

Prologue or Introduction. (Chapter i, 1-18.)

PART I.

Manifestation of Christ's Glory Through Works and Words Connected With His Pubic Ministry. (Chapters i, 19—xii.)

PART II.

Manifestation of Christ's Glory Through Works and Words Connected With His Public Ministry. (Chapters i, 19—xii.)

Epilogue or Appendix. (Chapter xxi.)

Hymn No. 199.

Upon the gospel's sacred page
The gathered beams of ages shine;
And, as it hastens, every age
But makes its brightness more divine.
—*John Bowring.*

Personal Questions:

Do I know that Jesus is the Christ by a personal experience of His grace?

Is the eternal life my present possession, or do I look for it only in the future?

Expert Testimony.

"He that saw it bare record, and his record is true; and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe."
—JOHN xix, 35.

This Gospel was written by the last man who could say, "I have seen the Lord!" We come very near to him through a letter which Irenæus wrote to Florinus, his old school-fellow, who had lapsed into heresy the latter part of the second century. He speaks of their relations to Polycarp, the bishop of Smyrna, their former master, who at eighty-six years of age had suffered martyrdom about A. D. 155. "I can tell," he writes, "the very place in which the blessed Polycarp used to sit when he discoursed, and his goings out, and his comings in, and his manner of life, and his personal appearance, and the discourses which he held before the people, and how he would describe his intercourse with John and with the rest of those who had seen the Lord, and how he would relate their words. And whatsoever things he had heard from them about the Lord, and about His miracles, and about His teaching, Polycarp, as having received them from eye-witnesses of the life of the Word, would relate altogether in accordance with the Scriptures." Thus John told Polycarp, and Polycarp told Irenæus, and Irenæus transmitted to his successors direct information concerning the Christ.

John speaks always with singular emphasis. "He knoweth that he saith true." In his First Epistle, which is a companion work to his Gospel, he leads off with these words: "That . . . which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; . . . that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us. . . . And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full." There are thirty instances in which the verb "to know" is employed in this one short document; and many other passages in which an equivalent is used. John was no

agnostic. Compare for illustrations, 1 John ii, 3; iii, 2; iii, 16; v, 15; v, 20. The conviction with which such a man speaks predisposes us to believe his testimony.

The character of John as revealed in his works determines his worth as a witness. Says Bishop Alexander: "He has left the Church three pictures that can never fade—in the Gospel the picture of Christ, in the Epistles the picture of his own soul, in the Apocalypse the picture of Heaven." In the portrait of himself we have depicted a pure-hearted man believing in Jesus Christ with all his soul, and writing the things which he is positive occurred in just the way he describes them. His Gospel is no idealization; it is not an illustration of what Jesus might be supposed to have said and done on the presumption that He was what He claimed to be, but what the Master actually did say and do under the precise circumstances given.

A tradition recited by Tertullian, who was born a few years after John died, shows with what stern veneration for veracity the Apostle was credited by his contemporaries. It seems that a presbyter of Asia Minor confessed that he was the author of an apocryphal work known as the "Acts of Paul and Thecla." It does not appear that the writer had any other motive than to glorify the memory of Paul by a piece of romantic, imaginative literature. But John deposed him from the ministry without hesitation, so profound was his hatred for anything which savored of untruth. It is inconceivable that a man with such a temper for reality could have foisted an invention upon his disciples; for "the offense of the Asiatic presbyter would have been light indeed compared with that of the mendacious Evangelist who could have deliberately fabricated discourses and narrated miracles which he dared to attribute to the Incarnate Son of God."

The difficulties of invention are almost insurmountable, in view of the exalted character of the Person whose

acts and words are described in the Gospels. The finger of forgery betrays itself in every attempt to manufacture language or situations for Jesus. Take this palpable invention which has passed down to us with the name of Papias attached to it: Some contemporaries of John declared that they had heard him say that Jesus was wont to affirm, "The days will come in which vines shall grow, each having ten thousand stems, and on each stem ten thousand branches, and on each branch ten thousand shoots, and on each shoot ten thousand clusters, and on each cluster ten thousand grapes, and each grape when pressed shall give twenty-five firkins of wine. And when any saint shall have seized one cluster, another shall cry, I am a better cluster, take me; through me bless the Lord." There is much more of this paltry stuff, all impressively false to the simplicity and reserve of Jesus as portrayed in the Gospels. General Lew Wallace soon found, upon gathering his material for "Ben Hur," that it would be utterly impossible to employ any other than the words of Scripture, if he introduced Jesus as speaking in any part of his narrative, and the Master appears but little as a direct participant in the action of his book. This was not only a triumph of art, but a limitation enforced by the sublime character of Jesus. Only the constant companion of the Master, who had caught the very spirit of Jesus, and who remembered His exact words, could have produced the Fourth Gospel.

The most pregnant sayings of Jesus, and especially those which are paradoxical and epigrammatic, any acute mind would be likely to remember. But the men who recorded the teachings of Jesus were aided by that divine inspiration which had been guaranteed them by their Lord. "The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

There is a very beautiful legend about the composition of this Gospel which, however lacking in historical verity, expresses in an imaginative way the unquestionable fact

that this great work was the product of prayer and meditation. The Apostle was about to leave Patmos for Ephesus—so the story runs—and the Christians of the island entreated him to place in writing an account of the Incarnation, and the marvelous life of the Son of God. Then John in company with some chosen friends withdrew from the haunts of men about a mile, and in a sequestered place known as the gorge of Rest he remained for a little time, and then ascended the mountain which rose above it. There he tarried for three days; at the expiration of which time he commanded Prochorus to descend into the town for paper and ink. After two days this comrade found him rapt in prayer standing alone. The Apostle said, "Take the ink and paper, and stand on my right hand." Prochorus did so, and there was a great lightning and thunder, so that the mountain shook, and Prochorus fell to the ground as if dead. Whereupon John stretched forth his hand and took hold of the man, and said, "Stand up at this spot at my right hand. Then he prayed again, and after his prayer said to his companion, "Son Prochorus, what thou hearest from my lips write upon the sheets." And having opened his mouth, as he was standing praying, and looking up to Heaven, he began to say: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." And so following on he spake in order, standing as he was, and Prochorus wrote sitting on his right.

Stalker recalls a picture which he saw from the pencil of one of the old masters, in which John is represented as having just written the first words of the Prologue, "when he pauses and lays down the pen, gazing awe-struck at the characters which express a meaning far beyond his own powers of comprehension." Fanciful as are such delineations, they indicate a widely prevalent conviction that the Gospel of John is too sublime a thing to have been made without direct divine interposition.

"We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true"—writes John in his first Epistle. That is the fact

to which the Apostle bears witness. He says in effect: "We looked long for God in earth and sky and sea. At last He came, unveiling Himself in the figure of Jesus Christ. There could be no deceit about the appearance. We saw, we heard, we handled. He remained in the world long enough to vindicate His claim. Then, slain in the body, He rose from the dead. After a sufficient period to prove that it was He and not a phantom, He ascended to the Majesty on high. In Him we saw God. And, while we perceived omnipotence in His works, and omniscience in His wisdom, we saw something else of which no philosophy ever dreamed—His love. This He revealed in acts of mercy, but especially in His voluntary sacrifice for our sins. 'Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us.' Not only so, but He has set us in the right angle to know God. He has given us an understanding. His love has illumined our minds. We know that we know His character. In this atmosphere of love which He has created, we know Him that is true."

The man's positiveness is inspiring. His godly life is convincing. His character is the best proof that he has seen God. He reminds us of the certitude of Diogenes, who when he heard Zeno attempting with subtle reasonings to prove there was no motion, suddenly started walking. When Zeno inquired the cause, he replied, "Hereby I confute you, and prove there is motion." The evidence of the Fourth Gospel's credibility is in the pure soul of him whose image is reflected from its every page. The man who made that book was incapable of falsehood. And his motive was too serious for any but a sincere spirit to adopt. He is eager to bring his readers to eternal life. "Many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through His name."

THE PROLOGUE.

CHAPTER I. 1-18.

The Fourth Gospel is like one of those great Egyptian temples which we may see to this day at Dendera, or Edfu, or Karnak—and we remember that the Temple on Mount Zion itself was of the same general type—the sanctuary proper is approached through a pylon, a massive structure overtopping it in height and outflanking it on both sides. The pylon of the Fourth Gospel is, of course, the Prologue.—SANDAY.

III.

THE PROLOGUE OR INTRODUCTION.

CHAPTER I. 1-18.

The gospel of the Son of Thunder opens with a peal.
—Plummer.

The Prologue (i, 1-18) is a wonderful piece of writing. Compare with introductions to the other gospels. Matthew written primarily for Jews; hence opens with a genealogical table calculated to establish the Messianic claims of Jesus. Mark consists of memorials intended to present to the Roman mind the personality and power of Jesus. Opens with the heralding of John the Baptist. Luke undertakes a formal history, and announces at the outset his aims, sources, and method, accompanied by a genealogy. John omits all such considerations. He begins with eternity; he will portray the divine Christ.

The purpose of the Prologue is obvious. Has been compared to the overture of an oratorio which "causes all the principal themes to be sounded which will be developed in the sequel of the work, and forms thus a prelude to the entire piece." The Prologue is a true introduction, summarizing in effect the entire gospel. It has been called the great gate into the gospel, with three doorways: the first (1-5), theological; the second (6-13), historical; the third (14-18), the doorway of experience. The whole is a rational conviction obtained from a close observation of the facts in the life of Christ

The Prologue contains three great dominant ideas: (1) The Son of God in His eternal being as creator of the universe, and the life and light of men. (2) The

revelation of the Son of God to men, and their manner of receiving Him. (3) The perfect disclosure of God the Father through the incarnation of the Son, as attested by personal experience. These three ideas will be found throughout the entire gospel.

I. THE SON OF GOD IN HIS ETERNAL BEING. (1-5.)

1. **Called the Word (Logos).** Term introduced without explanation. It is assumed that readers are familiar with it. A term in current use. Not easily understood by persons unacquainted with its history. Critics have charged that John took it from Philo, a Jewish philosopher, of Alexandria, who died about ten years after the crucifixion of Jesus. His doctrines were a mixture of Mosaic religion and Greek philosophy. John would not be discredited if this accusation were proven, for Philo's views were based, not only on the teachings of Plato and the Stoics, but also on the Old Testament and the later Hebrew theology. He was himself a devout Jew, who held that Greek philosophy was divinely inspired as well as the Scriptures. Whether Philo derived his doctrine of the Logos (Word) from the Old Testament in the first instance, or from Plato, is not known, though the presumption is that he got it from the former, in view of his early religious training as a Jew. Whether John was acquainted with the writings of Philo or not, he would find the doctrine of the Logos (Word) suggested, if not actually taught, in the ancient Scriptures. "The word of Jehovah" is a phrase often used in the Old Testament, and frequently with the idea of personification. There were also Targums, or paraphrases of the Old Testament books, in common use in his day, with which John and his disciples were doubtless familiar, in which "the word of God" was personified, and to it were attributed divine power and wisdom, in order more completely to separate God from the world. Example: Adam and Eve are represented as hearing the voice of "the word of the Lord," and

"the word of the Lord" calls unto Adam. (Gen. iii, 8, 9.) This phraseology illustrates the hesitancy of the Jews to speak of God as acting directly upon the world. This disposition was still more marked in a Jew who had been tinged with Greek philosophy, like Philo, who held the most abstract ideas of God's nature. The chasm between the transcendent Deity and the lower world must be bridged by the theory of intermediate powers or ideas, and the sum of these was the Logos (Word). Some writers claim that John derived the suggestion for his doctrine of the Word (Logos) from the Targums entirely. Others hold that he obtained it from both these and the writings of Philo. The question is not one of great practical moment. The idea was current in theological literature for at least two centuries before he wrote his gospel. He simply adopted a term of common use in philosophical speech, in order by employing it to adapt the idea of the pre-existence and divinity of Christ to the minds of his Greek readers. It is given a new character, however, when used by John. "The personification of the divine word in the Old Testament is poetical; in Philo metaphysical; in Saint John historical." It is a fact of observation and experience in the conception of John. A very apt method of indicating the manifested God both to Jews and to pagans, in view of the difficulty, which all feel, of perceiving how the infinite Spirit can disclose Himself to the finite mind. The Word of God is that by which He utters Himself, has communication with other beings, deals with them, expresses His power, intelligence, and will. What a perfect title for the Son of God, "who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power," is the full utterance of the invisible and eternal God to the souls of men.

2. **Affirmations concerning the Word (Logos).** Five notable ascriptions are made: (*a*) Eternity of existence in verse 1. (*b*) Eternal fellowship with God,

in verses 1, 2. (*c*) Identity with God, in verse 1. (*d*) Creator of the universe, in verse 3. (*e*) Light and life of men, in verse 4. It is impossible to read these sentences without being reminded of the first words of Genesis. The doctrine herein enunciated is that of the New Testament generally concerning the person of Christ. Compare Col. i, 16, 17; Heb. i, 1-3; xi, 3. Christ is represented in this Prologue as the source from which every form of life—physical, intellectual, moral, spiritual, eternal—proceeds. Observe how John's ideas flow into one another. "Creation leads on to life, and life leads on to light. Without life creation would be unintelligible; without light all but the lowest forms of life would be impossible."

II. THE REVELATION OF THE SON OF GOD TO MEN; THEIR MANNER OF RECEIVING HIM. (5-13.)

The Word (Logos) is here spoken of as Light. Appeared and was adequately attested. Unbelief rejected Him; belief welcomed Him. The Light shone in the darkness, but the darkness could not apprehend Him. Though the Word is the spiritual light in every man, man's sin (darkness) made it impossible for him to see. "The eternal Son is the universal Sun."

1. **John the Baptist testified of Him.** (6-8.) Personal testimony to the truth is one of John's favorite ideas. Inseparable from the idea of belief in the truth. "A reason for the hope." Necessary to state that John the Baptist was not the true light, in view of the fact that at Ephesus, where this gospel was written, Paul found disciples depending wholly upon John's baptism. (Acts xix, 1-6.)

2. **He was ever active in the world, but the world failed to recognize Him.** (10.) A tragic tone. He made the world. He was in the world; yet the world did not know Him. The Creator came and was not recognized. The Græco-Roman world

was unconscious of the nearness of God. "They registered His birth, took account of Him as one to be taxed, but were as little aware as the oxen with whom He shared His first sleeping-place that this was God."

3. **He came to His own in the flesh, but they rejected Him.** (11.) Tragic note repeated. Compare the Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen. (Matt. xxi, 33-41.) This has been called "the saddest verse in the Bible."

4. **Some did receive Him, and entered into a new life.** (12, 13.) Always two general classes of persons respecting the claims of Jesus. "There was a division of the people." His wonderful works, His wonderful words, His wonderful character provoked opposite results. "Power to become the sons of God" means authority, right, liberty. Man is born with the *capacity* to become a son of God. Christ gives him the *right*. Christ is from all eternity the Son of God; men are qualified to become the sons of God by divine grace. No natural process in regeneration. Three times John asserts it. "Born, not of blood, not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

III. THE DISCLOSURE OF GOD THE FATHER THROUGH THE INCARNATION AS ATTESTED BY PERSONAL EXPERIENCE. (14-18.)

1. **Humiliation.** (14.) The Word (Logos) existing from all eternity with the Father (1, 2) not only manifested His power in creation (3), and in influence on the minds of men (9, 12, 13), but also exhibited Himself in the form of flesh. The Creator became a creature.

2. **Glorification.** (14.) In His very humiliation His glory was manifest. "We beheld." Possible reference to the transfiguration (Luke ix, 32; 2 Peter i, 17, 18), and to the opening vision of the Apocalypse. His glory always apparent to John, who was a seer,

a man of vision. "Full of grace and truth." Comeliness, winsomeness, kindliness, good-will, favor. "We beheld." Gazed upon Him as an astronomer upon the starry heavens. His glory was perfectly obvious to the believer. "To the unbeliever he was a bankrupt Galilean; to the believer he was the embodied might of God." Christ the beauty, the majesty, the power, the wisdom of God.

3. **Testimony.** (15, 16.) John the Baptist made a great impression on John the Evangelist. Three times in a few verses he records the proclamation which created such an epoch in his own life. As soon as Jesus appeared, the forerunner began to disappear. The testimony of John the Baptist is confirmed by believers. "Of His fullness have all we received."

4. **Summary of the purpose of the Incarnation.** (18.) "A visible revelation of the invisible God." God's response to the craving of men to see, know, and understand Him. God revealed in a personal way, by a personal medium. Lessons of the Incarnation: (1) God is not alienated from us, but identified with us. (2) As Christ's love became incarnate, so the Christian's love must be embodied in living deeds.

Note.

Many great terms of the Gospel are anticipated in the Prologue, which not only presents in outline what is to be developed in the body of the gospel, but also contains certain key-words and their cognates, which are repeated frequently in the subsequent chapters. John has been accused of poverty of style, because of his constant repetition of terms. But this is not a serious accusation, for his words thus repeated do not represent abstract notions, but "powerful spiritual realities." They have been compared to "pieces of gold with which great lords make payments." Many of these are in the Prologue, and occur again in the body of the book. They indicate threads of thought which are woven throughout the entire texture. Examples follow:

Life. (4.) With its cognate, to **live,** occurs 52 times.

Light. (4, 5, 7, 8, 9.) Occurs 23 times.

Witness. (Testimony, testify, same root)—(7) is found 47 times.

Believe. (7, 12.) Great word with John. Testimony induces men to believe. Belief leads to eternal life. Used 98 times.

Know. (10.) Occurs 55 times.

World. (9, 10.) Used 78 times.

Name. (12.) Occurs 25 times.

Glory. (14.) **Glorified,** found 42 times.

Truth. (17.) Used 25 times.

Hymn No. 107.

Joy to the world! the Lord is come;
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare Him room,
And heaven and nature sing.

—*Isaac Watts.*

Personal Questions:

Have I heard and heeded the utterance of the Word to me?

Have I, a child of God by nature, become a child of God by grace?

Have I beheld His glory, and received His fullness?

God With Us.

"The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us."
—JOHN i, 14.

"The world by wisdom knew not God." These words have been suggested as an epitaph for the tomb of ancient philosophy. They describe as accurately the failure of modern thought apart from revelation. "In my heaven I find no God," said Laplace. "I have peered through the heavens for sixty years," wrote Lalande, "and have

never seen Him yet." Said a white-haired Indian to Sir John Franklin, "I am an old man now, but I have never seen God." John's word is true, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." Christ as the perfect *exegesis* of God fulfills the necessities of the human mind and heart.

Manifestations of God have been multiplied through the ages. Nature has been forever breaking forth into syllables and sentences containing a revelation of the Eternal. As Sir William Jones has written:

"The heavens are a point from the pen of His perfection;
The world is a rosebud from the bower of His beauty;
The sun is a spark from the light of His wisdom;
And the sky a bubble on the sea of His power."

History has gradually unfolded a record of His doings among men. Conscience has constantly admonished the soul of His righteousness. "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." But these revelations have been fragmentary and provisional. Their messages could only be caught by spiritually heightened intelligences. "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son." The utterance is clear and comprehensive. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."

A metaphysical discussion of that term *Word,* the best, though not an entirely satisfactory translation of the Greek term *Logos,* would possibly weary us. We may have small interest in the fact that this was a kind of philosophical expression employed and understood alike by cultivated Jews and Greeks. We may not even have curiosity to know how John, the fisherman, hap-

pened to light upon it, though we shall probably think it was an inspiration, since it is so beautifully apposite for his purpose. What will doubtless seize our minds is that John wanted to say: "In Christ God has uttered Himself—the long silence has been broken—God has become vocal in forms of speech we can understand by an immediate and not an intermediate process."

Yet we may well pause a little on that term *Word*. A man's word is that by which his mind, his will, his power, his character is expressed. His word is his own; it is not shared, and can not be shared, with another. It can not be separated from himself; in a sense it is himself. By it we know his thought, his purpose, his character. When a man says, "I give you my word," he pledges his character. All that constitutes his personality has been committed to his declaration. So Christ is God uttered in terms of personality such as we can apprehend.

Let us go a little deeper. "The Word was made flesh." That does not mean that God made the best man He was capable of producing, and then sent him to earth as His representative. It is not doubted that God reveals Himself in some degree in all human beings, and it is conceivable that God might make a man who should illustrate in himself all that God intended to reveal by human nature, and who should perfectly conform to His will; yet this ideal man would not be what Christ is. Christ is not simply a perfect man. He is God incarnate. The personality is divine. Christ is God with us. Upon the mystery we do not attempt to lay hands, but we must thank God that the Word is made flesh, for without that wonderful transaction a necessity of our natures would not be met.

Professor Bowne recalls the story of Serapion, a worthy monk, who in early times fell into the error of taking the figurative language of the Bible in a strictly literal sense. In this way he came to look upon God as an enormous and omnipotent human being, and his mind was filled with gross material conceits of the divine personality. Paphnutius, a priest, and Photinus, a deacon,

reasoned with him, and showed him that God is a spirit without bodily parts, and finally by their arguments and by their personal authority they persuaded Serapion to renounce his misconceptions. Then they offered thanks to God for having restored the deluded disciple to the true faith. But in the very midst of their thanksgiving the monk threw himself on the ground, weeping and wailing because, as he said, they had taken away his God and left him no one to whom he could pray.

Such is the constitution of our minds, that only persons of the most refined intellects can find satisfaction in a contemplation of God which does not identify Him with those expressions of personality which are common to our own being. When we get confused about the person of God it is a most happy circumstance that we can turn to the figure of Jesus Christ and say, "He is God."

The Word made flesh is, then, the most convincing external evidence of the existence and character of God. It is the one satisfactory demonstration that God is accessible, available, attainable, tangible. There are other proofs of God's existence. Theistic philosophy, let us confess, has made out its case, and whoever has acuteness of mind enough to follow the argument will probably be convinced of that. He will feel that there must be a God to correspond with the deep-seated conviction of universal mankind that there is an invisible Power in the universe. He will see that nature can not be studied without bringing an overwhelming conclusion that there is an ultimate energy endowed with intelligence and will, that is, with personal qualities. When Liebig was asked if he believed that the grass and flowers which he saw around him grew by mere chemical forces he replied: "No; no more than I could believe that the books on botany describing them could grow by mere chemical forces." But then, if you give me no better God than one constructed out of the necessities of thought, I would be almost as happy if you had given me no God at all.

If there is no fellowship with Him, if He is not accessible and available, my interest in Him outside of a philosophical requirement is very slight. I view nature which speaks of God with no great joy. The smiling fields only exasperate me. I am like Job of old: "Behold, I go forward, but He is not there, and backward, but I can not perceive Him; on the left hand where He doth work, but I can not behold Him; He hideth Himself on the right hand that I can not see Him."

Those Russian peasants, sweeping up to the palace of the Czar, a great volume of humanity, eager for royal clemency and sympathy, presented a most dramatic spectacle. Civilization is appalled that a sovereign endowed with such immense power could apparently be indifferent, unmoved by the appeal of his oppressed and struggling subjects. But the pathos of the Czar's repulsion would be immeasurably outdone by the indifference of the eternal God to the pitiful clamors of humanity, if He were to remain absolutely silent in the presence of their deep and universal solicitude to find Him. But God is with us. Incarnation affirms it, and the experience of the race with Jesus Christ confirms it. God has been made flesh and tabernacled with us. We may say as did the patriarch Job, after he had received the full revelation of God's fellowship with him, "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee."

The Word made flesh is a disclosure of the character of God. In the face of Jesus Christ we see that He is goodness personified. Is not that our highest conception of the Eternal? The most convincing attributes of God are not power, vast size, dazzling glory, but goodness without a flaw, holiness that can not be tempted, love that accommodates itself to all the needs of His creatures, spiritual qualities which show themselves to be truly divine. Are not these the qualities which in human beings make their most effective appeals to our souls? The great heart wins our admiration in competition with the strong mind. If God could only make His approach

to us through our intellects, He would not produce those great effects upon our conscience which are so necessary to our moral and spiritual welfare. It is because through Jesus Christ He has access to our hearts that He wins us to Himself. One can even express tolerance for the conquerors who have been chiefly wholesale murderers when he sees that occasionally they fell into deeds of goodness and charity; and the question which most deeply interests us is not "Is God great?"—every one can see that He is—but "Is God good?" The heavens declare the glory of God, but they do not declare His love in unmistakable terms. They show that He is an artist and loves beauty, that He is an artificer and has wrought incomparably; that His works are full of order and harmony; that He has filled the universe with a certain kind of melody; that He has the mind of a perfect poet; and from these considerations we should doubtless suspect the element of goodness in His nature. But absolute proof of this would be lacking without such a manifestation of His character as we have in Jesus Christ. It is only in such personal relations as are exhibited in the life of Jesus that the inherent and eternal goodness of God are made clear, and when the soul falls into confusion concerning the character of the invisible God there is only sure relief in gazing upon the figure of the Son of God. If we question the goodness of God we have only to look upon the face of His Anointed. It was such an experience which settled forever the faith of the early apostles. "We beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

The mystery of the Incarnation is insoluble; its message is immeasurably blessed.

> The very God! think, Abib; dost thou think?
> So, the All-Great were the All-Loving, too—
> So, through the thunder comes a human voice
> Saying, "O heart I made, a heart beats here!
> Face, my hands fashioned, see it in myself!"
>
> —*Browning.*

Gustavus Adolphus, rising before the dawn on the day of the battle of Lützen, refused to put on his breast-plate because his old wounds hurt him under harness. "God is my breast-plate," he said, and went upon the glorious field. When asked for a watchword he replied, "God with us." His soldiers sang "A mighty fortress is our God," as they advanced against the foe; and sustained by an unfaltering trust in the Divine Presence they wrought a wondrous triumph.

That is the heartening message of the Incarnation—God is with us, not beyond us.

PART I.

Manifestation of Christ's Glory Through Works and Words Connected With His Public Ministry.—Chapters I, 19—XII.

ANALYSIS.

I. INTRODUCTORY PERIOD: INITIAL TESTIMONIES.

1. The Witness of John the Baptist. (I, 19-37.)
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II. PERIOD OF UNDISTURBED ACTIVITY. (II-IV.)

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2. Discourse on Life: A Defense. (V, 17-47.)
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1. The Supper at Bethany. (XII, 1-11.)
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SECTION I.

INTRODUCTORY PERIOD: INITIAL TESTIMONIES.

CHAPTER I. 19-51.

The author of the Fourth Gospel attaches much importance to evidence in the plan of his work. Seven kinds of testimony are adduced. They may be distinguished as the witness (1) of John the Baptist, (2) of other individuals, (3) of the works of Jesus, (4) of the Father, (5) of the Scriptures, (6) of Jesus Himself, (7) of the Holy Spirit.

John makes large use of the individual witness. At the forefront of his Gospel he presents the testimony of John the Baptist, and follows immediately with the testimony of certain persons who subsequently became apostles. Throughout the work he pauses to insert the testimony of those who were convinced by the words and works of Jesus. Notable examples are the following: Nathanael (i, 49), Andrew (i, 41), Nicodemus (iii, 2), Samaritan woman (iv, 29), Samaritan men (iv, 42), Man born blind (ix), Martha (xi, 27), Thomas (xx, 28).

Introductory to the public ministry of Jesus our author presents two notable examples of personal testimony to His character and mission.

1. The Witness of John the Baptist.
2. The Witness of the First Disciples.

IV.

THE WITNESS OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.

CHAPTER I. 19-37.

The Gospel of John is the most original, the most important, the most influential book in all literature. . . . It is simple as a child and sublime as a seraph, gentle as a lamb and bold as an eagle, deep as the sea and high as the heavens.—*Schaff.*

WHILE the other Evangelists give impressive pictures of the career of John the Baptist, our author only glances slightly at these matters, while he lays strong emphasis on the testimony of the man. Mentioned twice in the Prologue (6, 15). Reasons for the emphasis laid on this testimony: (1) A natural and personal one—John the Baptist is the man who pointed John the Evangelist to Jesus. (2) John the Baptist the most prominent man of his times, universally accepted by the people as a prophet, who could not be supposed mistaken concerning the chief item of his mission. (3) Divinely inspired. "A man sent from God whose name was John." (4) A dominant personality. "Certainly among the six greatest men the world has seen." (*Dods.*) "There hath not risen a greater." (*Jesus.*)

The position of John the Baptist deserves careful study. His birth and parentage. Entrance upon the prophetic office. In a sense belonged to the new dispensation. Marked the point of emergence of the Christian Church into history. Probably preached and baptized contemporaneously with Jesus for a year. Threefold testimony of John the Baptist. Given on three successive days. 1. To the Sanhedrin Deputation—the Messiah announced. 2. To the populace—the Messiah pointed out. 3. To John's disciples—the Messiah to be followed.

I. THE BAPTIST'S TESTIMONY TO THE COMMITTEE OF THE SANHEDRIN (19-28).

The Messiah Announced.

1. **The Investigating Committee.** Deputation of priests and Levites. Sanhedrin, the ecclesiastical head of the Jewish nation. Composed of seventy-one members including the high priest, who was president *ex officio*. Contained three classes of persons: Chief Priests, probably high priests who had retired from office, and members chosen from the highest priestly families; Elders, probably the other members in general, whether lay or Levitical; Scribes, experts in the law, jurists by profession. They were generally Levites, and hence their connection with the deputation. Perhaps not a formal embassy, but an influential committee of inquiry, sent at the instigation of the Pharisees, who could not afford to ignore a movement which was gaining strength every day, and which heralded the approach of the Messiah.

2. **The Baptist's modest disclaimer (20-23).** His self-forgetfulness. Will not permit himself to be regarded as anything more than a voice, heralding the coming Messiah. Compare Isa. xl, 3. Leveling of roads in the East for approaching sovereigns an illustration.

3. **Explanation of his Baptism (24-28).** A rite being introduced into the theocracy without official sanction. If John the Baptist is not the Messiah, or any great prophet, as he insists, why then does he baptize?—the question of the Pharisees. Difficulty of interpreting John's reply. Perhaps the meaning is best expressed in this way: If the Messiah has actually come, and John is His true forerunner, he is justified in inaugurating this rite. With a significant glance into the crowd he says, "The Messiah is here! I need no other authentication." This must have produced a sensation.

II. THE BAPTIST'S TESTIMONY TO THE POPULACE (29-34).

The Messiah Pointed Out.

"He no longer merely says, 'He is there,' but he cries, 'There He is!'" (*Godet.*) The Baptist's announcement not a continuous discourse, but a series of sudden outbursts inspired by the occasion.

1. **A Wonderful Title**—"The Lamb of God." Probable reference to Isa. liii, also to the paschal lamb. Same figure employed by John the Evangelist in the Apocalypse. The sin of the world regarded as one great load.

2. **The Ground of the Baptist's Confidence (31-33).** His testimony is based on the testimony from heaven. The visible token—the hovering dove, and the audible token—the voice from heaven. (Matt. iii, 16, 17.)

3. **The Son of God (34).** The title used by the voice from heaven. The Baptist bears testimony to Christ's divine origin with eagerness in view of this celestial witness.

III. THE BAPTIST'S TESTIMONY TO HIS DISCIPLES (35-37).

The Messiah To Be Followed.

One of the disciples is Andrew, and the other is presumed to be John, from the modest way in which he is mentioned. They are urged to follow Jesus. They accept the injunction eagerly. Thus begins the Christian movement.

The Testimony of John the Baptist Summarized: He witnesses to the pre-eminence of Jesus (27, 30); the pre-existence of Jesus (15, 30); the efficacy of His redemption (29); His spiritual endowment (33); His unique personality (34).

The Effects of the Baptist's Testimony. They are partly known and party conjectured. Silence on the

part of the Sanhedrin deputation. Unknown results with the crowd, though many persons must have been impressed. A decision for Christ by Andrew and Peter. We must feel the weight of this man's testimony, for he was qualified as few others could be to bear reliable witness.

Hymn No. 222.

Happy, if with my latest breath
I may but gasp His name;
Preach Him to all, and cry in death,
"Behold, behold the Lamb!"

—*Charles Wesley.*

Personal Questions:

1. Have I like John the Baptist borne personal testimony to Christ, sinking self out of sight?
2. Have I like Andrew and John gone straight after Christ when I have been urged to follow Him?

The Man Who Discovered Christ.

"And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God."—JOHN i, 34.

When Sir Humphry Davy was applauded for his important discoveries, he replied, "My best discovery was Michael Faraday." After a man has attained eminence there are many to claim they foresaw his greatness. Zola wrote on for years before his pen earned his bread. Then suddenly a novel attracted attention, and all his works were in demand. Millet was once compelled to paint signs, instead of works of art, in order to buy food for his family. About the time his "Angelus" was finished he wrote to a friend: "We have only wood for two or three days more. . . . I am suffering and sad." Later his works sold for fabulous sums. When he died there

was an explosion of sympathy and an universal rendering of justice to his memory. Anybody can discover a man when he has become famous. It is the rare mind which detects the genius in its earliest struggles for expression. The noblest character may suffer a temporary obscuration. Jesus was not known to His own family. It is doubtful if His mother realized the full significance of His person. To John the Baptizer belongs the distinction of having first discovered that Jesus was the Christ. The process of his discovery deserves attention.

He was expecting the Messiah. He had been set apart for the prophetic office, and had interpreted the signs of the times. The age was calling for a deliverer. The low point of current religious life indicated the necessity. He had spent long years in the wilderness ruminating upon the matter. The Holy Spirit had brooded over his thought. He became possessed of the sublime conviction that the Messiah would appear in his generation, that He was even now approaching. Then he started forth to proclaim His advent, knowing that in God's good time He would be discovered. "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight," sounded along the valley of the Jordan. The multitudes came to his baptism. He instructed them in the things which were essential to a genuine penitence, and evermore added, "I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." He knew the crisis was near. He felt the premonitory tokens in his own soul, as men experience the anticipatory tremors of a new movement in society. He went about his work with his mind strangely alert, his ears attentive, his eyes open. Somewhere, and at some time, out of the crowds which flocked to his ministry the Messiah would emerge, and his own mission would be finished. As Adams and Leverrier

were convinced that the planet Neptune existed long before it was discovered, because they noted that at one point along its orbit the planet Uranus was deflected from the perfect curve of its track through space by the attraction of some unknown body, and from their calculations were able to determine accurately where this ponderous bulk was located, the telescope triumphantly confirming their predictions; so the Baptizer, reckoning from the spiritual data which were available to his extraordinary insight, proclaimed the coming of the Messiah, and saw his prophecy fulfilled as gloriously as any astronomer ever beheld his mathematical computations vindicated.

One day John the Baptizer was impressed with the appearance of a stranger who came to the Jordan for baptism. There is something in the bearing of a great character which certifies to the inner dignity of his soul. Bismarck told a friend that it was impossible to imagine a position, however trying, in which the old King William did not look and act every inch a king. Even in déshabille, in bed, old and worn out, when shot at by Nobiling, and wounded with small shot as though he were a pheasant, there was always something dignified about him, which differentiated him from other people. There was a serene nobility in the carriage of the candidate for baptism who now appeared before John the Baptizer which arrested his attention. The man was Jesus of Nazareth, whom John afterward says he did not know. This seems strange, for they had grown up together. Still they had been separated for years, the one pursuing his ascetic life in the wilderness, the other quietly growing up in Nazareth. Possibly they had not met since they had attained their manhood.

It is more probable, however, that John meant to say he did not recognize Jesus in His true office. He knew Him as his kinsman, but he did not perceive that He was the Messiah at the moment. He had no adequate knowledge of the vast mission of Jesus. Still he recognized

His superiority, and soon had reason to hesitate about baptizing Him.

Baptism involved confession for sin, and Jesus could not confess sins which He had not committed. When, therefore, He began His acknowledgment preparatory to baptism, He must have made a representative confession, assuming the sins of the race, identifying Himself with fallible humanity, and thereby revealing Himself as the Redeemer of mankind.

Perhaps, also, there was a confidential conversation between these two, in which Jesus explained to the Baptizer His true relation to humanity. In any case John hesitates to perform the rite of baptism for one who apparently can not properly receive it. He sees in Jesus one higher than himself in holy character. "I have need to be baptized of Thee," he exclaims, "and comest Thou to me?" And Jesus replied, "Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness."

When they proceeded into the water together a wondrous thing occurred, which confirmed the impression already made on the mind of the Baptizer, and vindicated the self-testimony of Jesus. Luke tells us that when Jesus was baptized He prayed. The response was immediate. From the opening heaven "the Holy Ghost descended in bodily shape like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art My beloved Son; in Thee I am well pleased." That was the ultimate proof for John, for the Spirit which had brooded over him in his solitude had indicated this as the sure token by which he should know the Divine One who "baptizeth with the Holy Ghost." Now John knew Jesus as he had not known Him before. "A blind man who had received his sight during the hours of darkness," says a learned writer, "might imagine, when he saw the reflected glory of the moon or morning star in the eye of dawn, that he knew the nature and had felt the glory of light; but amidst the splendors of sunrise or of noon he might justly say, 'I knew it not.'"

Now the Baptizer is qualified to offer testimony of incalculable value. Thus far he has simply prophesied that One was coming after him who was preferred before him. Now he could proclaim that the Great One had arrived. When the Sanhedrin sends the deputation from Jerusalem to inquire into His mission, the Baptizer affirms that the expectation of Israel is realized—the Messiah is standing in their very presence.

The next day, as he sees Jesus coming to him, he cries, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!" A new conception of Christ has dawned upon him. From his recognition of Christ's official relation to the race, as the representative man who is to bring in the kingdom of God, he passes on to the recognition of Christ's sacrificial relation to the world and to God. He is the Divine offering for humanity. John's Jewish training would prepare him for the idea. His priestly connections through his father would dispose him to embrace it. The inspiration of the Holy Ghost would confirm it. And in a moment of sudden, sure illumination he exclaimed, "Behold the Lamb of God!" He may have recalled the words of Isaiah (liii, 4-7), which now bore a new and profounder meaning. He may have thought of the paschal lamb offered in many households. His mind may have been quickened by the sight of sheep being driven up to Jerusalem for the approaching Passover. But the Holy Spirit must have opened his soul to the deep meaning of Christ's person and mission.

When Agassiz, out of the depths of his well-stored mind, was able to picture for an assembly of English scientists an exact reproduction of a fossil fish which had been discovered, though he was not aware of it, in lower strata than had been previously known, achieving this feat by means of pure reasoning, based on what ought to be there if it had any existence, the company were astounded at his intellectual triumph, and an observer remarked, "To such an extent had this great

scientist advanced in a knowledge of the plan of God in nature." John's recognition of Jesus reveals a higher perception of the plan of God in human nature, and it was due to a profound intelligence quickened by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost.

It is noteworthy that this richer conception of Christ's office which John the Baptizer obtained is only described in the Fourth Gospel. In the accounts of his preaching which the other evangelists give the judicial aspects of Christ's mission are presented with something akin to harshness. "Whose fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and will gather the wheat into His garner; but the chaff will He burn with fire unquenchable." Now it is the meek, the unspotted Lamb, whose grace overtops His justice, who is not to condemn but to save the world, "which taketh away the sin of the world," as contrasted with the avenging servant of Jehovah who will destroy the impenitent. When this more satisfying thought of Christ's mission had entered the mind of John, there was nothing for the conscientious prophet to do but pass his disciples on to the Lord. "Behold the Lamb of God!" spoken on the following day, was intended as an exhortation to follow Christ, and was so understood by his companions. "And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God. He is the ultimate need of the world. Beyond Him is no one. He is the altogether lovely and the chiefest among ten thousand."

The Baptizer's discovery of Christ is the prototype of all the subsequent findings of the Savior by seeking sinners. The conviction that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, is a development in the soul. There is first an eagerness to find that Christ who can fill the needs of human life. The presentation of Jesus in His spotless purity impresses the soul that He is the highest manifestation of grace and goodness. Under this revelation the soul is smitten with the terror of its own infirmities, and the dread that this Perfect One will condemn the sinner to destruction. Then the love of Christ in offering

Himself for the world's relief turns terror into penitence and distrust into faith, and having accepted the propitiatory offices of Christ, the soul exclaims, "I see, and bear record that this is the Son of God."

It is related that once Mendelssohn came to see the great Freiburg organ. At first the old custodian refused him permission to put his fingers upon it, not knowing who he was. Finally he grudgingly allowed him to play a few notes, and soon the most wonderful music was rolling forth from the instrument. The jealous guardian of the organ was spell-bound. At length he came up beside the great musician and asked his name. When he was told he stood almost dumb with humiliation and self-condemnation, and then exclaimed with deep abasement, "And I refused you permission to play upon my organ!" How foolish it is to tease the soul about the philosophy of the atonement, to stumble at the proclamation of the "Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world," to say with Peter Cooper, "I do n't need any one to die for my sins," to repudiate the theory of a vicarious sacrifice because it does not appeal to reason, while all the time the Master stands ready to transform life, not on the strength of our understanding, but of our obedience. The evidence that Jesus Christ is what John the Baptizer declared Him to be lies in the Divine harmonies which He evokes from natures which are surrendered to His touch.

V.

THE WITNESS OF THE CALLED DISCIPLES.

CHAPTER I. 38-51.

This Gospel is the consummation of the Gospels, as the Gospels are of all the Scriptures.—*Origen.*

THE value of such testimony as John now presents lies in the fact that it is unofficial and gratuitous. The author evidently holds that it provides a sufficient ground for belief to those who are willing to receive it. However, it can only secure an external relation between the believer and the object of belief. In order to be vital, faith must enter into direct contact with its object. The weight and volume of such testimony will predispose his readers, John believes, to accept Christ as the Son of God. He represents Jesus as pronouncing a special benediction on those who have been wise enough to accept Him on the strength of such testimony. "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed" (xx, 29). Value of testimony of individuals in our own times is very obvious. Persons who know the Lord by a spiritual experience of His fellowship make a profound impression on candid inquirers. Modern illustrations. We have here two groups of witnesses, falling into two successive days.

I. THE TESTIMONY OF ANDREW AND JOHN (38-42).

1. **The Unmentioned Disciple, probably John,** who in other passages suppresses his own name, though he is evidently prominent in the transaction. Impression made on Andrew and John by the proclamation of the Baptist is easily imagined. Their timid following is interrupted by the incisive question of

Jesus, "What seek ye?"—not "Whom?" Answer will reveal whether they are inspired by simple curiosity or genuine interest. "Where dwellest Thou?" "Come and see." The urgency of Jesus. Perhaps they intend to ascertain His whereabouts, and then visit Him at their convenience. They are bidden at once. They accept and abide with Him "that" never-to-be-forgotten "day" (39).

2. **Breaking the News to Peter (40-42).** Archbishop Trench calls this the Eureka chapter. "We have found the Messias!" Andrew is apparently not so great a man as some others of the apostles, but he can bring his brother, who is a very aggressive person. Twice again Andrew is portrayed bringing some one to Jesus: the lad with the loaves and fishes (vi, 8), and certain Greeks (xii, 22). Herein lies the key to his character.

3. **Reading Peter's Character (42).** "I know you as you are, and I know what you can become—a stone." The insight and foresight of Jesus.

II. THE TESTIMONY OF PHILIP AND NATHANAEL (43-51).

1. **Finding Philip (43).** On the way to Galilee Jesus calls Philip. An illustration of the way in which the truth is sometimes directly applied to a man's conscience without any apparent intermediary. A profound impression of the character of Jesus is immediately made upon his mind.

2. **Breaking the News to Nathanael (45).** "We have found Him." So one torch lights another. Nathanael's hesitation. "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Study character of the Galileans. Philip's wise response: "Come and see." An echo of Christ's words to Andrew and John. Christianity's challenge to the world—Investigate. The height of wisdom in modern evangelism.

3. **Reading Nathanael's Character (47, 48).** His name means, "the gift of God." Under the fig-tree Jesus saw the devotions of the man whom He called "an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile." It was under a fig-tree that Augustine heard the famous "Take and read." (*Plummer.*) Nathanael's surprise. What consternation among us if we saw ourselves as He sees us!

4. **Nathanael's Testimony (49).** "Thou art the Son of God, Thou art the King of Israel." The greater title includes the less. The response of Jesus—"Verily, verily." "Amen, amen." Twenty-five times used by John in this gospel. Always introduces a truth of unusual importance.

5. **Christ's Favorite Designation of Himself.** "The Son of Man" (51). Used upwards of eighty times in the four gospels, always by Christ of Himself as Messiah. Expression is found in the Psalms, where it means the ideal man; in Ezekiel, where it is applied to the prophet, and in the night visions of Daniel. Christ's use gave it a new meaning: in Him the whole human race culminates. (*Plummer.*)

Note.

This call of the disciples is to be compared with the final call in Galilee after the miraculous draught of fishes. (Matt. iv, 18-22; Mark i, 16-20; Luke v, 1-11.) The differences in the accounts are sufficient to mark them as two events.

Observe how Jesus adapts Himself to the different temperaments and conditions of men. For Andrew and John there is the ever-memorable evening conversation. For Simon Peter the heart-searching word, which penetrates his very being. For Philip the peremptory command, "Follow Me." For Nathanael a gracious courtesy, which disarms his prejudice. Thus there are those who seek Christ, those who are brought to Christ, and those whom Christ seeks. (*Dods.*) Fine suggestions for evangelistic diplomacy here.

Hymn No. 410.

Lord, speak to me, that I may speak
In living echoes of Thy tone;
As Thou has sought, so let me seek
Thy erring children lost and lone.
—*Frances R. Havergal.*

Personal Questions:

1. Have I dared to mention Christ to my closest associates—to my brother, as Andrew did? to my friend, as Philip did?

2. Have I experienced the joy which Andrew and John felt when they said, "We have found the Messias," and which Philip felt when he cried, "We have found Him of whom the Scriptures speak?"

Introduced to Jesus.

"Come and see."
"We have found the Messias!"
"And he brought him to Jesus."
—JOHN i, 39, 41, 42.

The most exalted moments in the biography of a soul are those which mark the discovery of a great truth, in quest of which long and patient toil has been expended. It would be worth a lifetime of painful investigation to experience the indescribable emotions of an Archimedes when, having suddenly realized that great law of hydrostatics with which his name is associated, he rushed from his bath to arouse the sluggish loungers on the streets of Syracuse with his triumphant, "I have found it." One might contentedly wear out a century in assiduous study, if at the end he could enter into the rapture of a Kepler when, having proved that the ellipse satisfies the requirements of the movements of the heavenly bodies, he exclaimed in ecstasy, "O God, I am thinking Thy thoughts after Thee!" And who would not covet the joy of the

Galilean fisherman who, after long waiting for the Deliverer of Israel, came upon Jesus of Nazareth one day, and after a few hours spent in His society rushed home to his brother, and excitedly cried, "We have found the Messias!" That was the greatest day in Andrew's life, and it was fraught with immeasurable consequences.

Andrew made the acquaintance of Jesus because he was invited to do so. The invitation came in response to his curiosity to see where Jesus lived, and his desire for a personal interview with Him. "Come and see," is the Master's encouraging word to him. The next day Philip adopts the same language with Nathanael, who doubts whether any good thing can come out of Nazareth. "Come and see"—it is a goodly challenge for every protagonist of Christianity to use with skeptics. It is the one way to meet misconceptions and misrepresentations. Men say that the doctrines of the Church are dry, obscure, and confusing. "Come and see; perhaps they have been improperly presented to you." They say they have doubts concerning the whole scheme of religion, and the teaching of faith does not appeal to them. "Come and see. Perhaps there is a solvent for your doubts, strength for your weakness, wisdom for your groping, salvation for your sin." They say they can not be sure that Christ is great enough for this age with its widening horizon. "Come and see. We invite investigation. We solicit examination." We remember the consequences of personal inquiry when Jesus was among men in the flesh, and are confident. It is recalled that, confronted by His sublime presence, the temple police said, "Never man spake like this man;" that Nathanael exclaimed, "Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel;" that Peter said, "Thou art the Christ;" that the Centurion cried, "Truly this was the Son of God!" If we can not convince men of the truth of our religion by introducing them to Christ, there can be no hope of doing it by other means, for Christ is the luminous expression of His own

teaching, the ultimate proof of His own doctrines. Christianity is Christ, not something about Christ.

The Christian, therefore, enjoys an advantage which does not belong to any other religionist. He is under no necessity to demonstrate the credibility of his faith by recourse to argument. To him that is the most delusive method of proving religion. Men have made themselves atheists by logic, however absurd that may seem to the Christian who believes that reason is wholly on his side. There is no creed so preposterous that it can not be vindicated by rational processes. Christianity stands not upon argument, but upon a conviction wrought by contact with a person, even Jesus Christ the Lord. If you bring down upon an unbelieving soul a plea for Christianity which is without one logical flaw, you may silence him, but leave him unconvinced. Argument seldom relieves doubts. It often drives them deeper. The wind in the fable could not tear the traveler's cloak from his shoulders. He simply wrapped it the more tightly about him, until the genial sun warmed him into the necessity of casting it off. Argument is a hammer which pounds the flinty rock of infidelity into dust, but does not change its constituents. You can shatter the skeptic's armor and reduce him to pulp with your merciless logic, and when you have finished, every molecule in him will still cry out his unbelief. The irresistible corrective for skepticism is Christ. "Come and see." And it is not very important by what motive men are led into Christ's society. Andrew and John are curious to ascertain where Jesus lives. "Come and see." Nicodemus is eager to discover how much there is the new prophet who is making such a stir. "Come and see," though it be under cover of darkness. Nathanael is a critic, who will apply severe tests to one who emerges from a place of unsavory reputation. "Come and see." To come is to be convinced.

When Munkacsy's "Christ Before Pilate" was on exhibition a few years ago in Hamilton, Ontario, a sailor from one of the lake boats accosted the woman who was in attendance at the door with the blunt question, "Is Christ here? How much to see Christ?" When he was

told the admission fee, he growled out, "Well, I suppose I 'll have to pay it," and putting down a piece of silver he swaggered into the room. He sat down in front of the great picture and studied it for a moment or two, and presently off came his hat. He gazed upon it a little longer, and then leaning down he picked up the descriptive catalogue which he had dropped when he took his seat. He read it over, and studied the painting anew, dropping his face into his hands at intervals. Thus he remained for a full hour. When he came out there were tears in his eyes, and suppressed sobs in his voice as he said: "Madam, I came here to see Christ because my mother asked me to. I am a rough man sailing on the lakes, and before I went on this cruise my mother wanted me to see this picture, and I came in to please her. I never believed in any such thing, but the man who could paint a picture like that—he must have believed in it. There is something in it that makes me believe in it, too. Madam, God helping me, I am a changed man from to-day." If an idealization of Christ by an artist can so effectively appeal to the conscience of a wayward man, what will not a vision of the Master, inspired of the Holy Ghost, accomplish for those who sincerely seek an introduction to Him?

"We have found the Messias!" cries Andrew. "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write," says Philip. It is wonderful that these men came so quickly to admit the true character of Jesus when we remember the hesitation which marked the conduct of many others on first meeting the Master's claims. "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." His own kinsmen after the flesh were suspicious of Him. His own townsmen rejected Him. The persons who made public opinion, and were eminently respectable, finally hounded Him to death. Ever since His story has been known there have been reputable people of all degrees of intelligence who have spurned Him. But these disciples hailed Him with a faith which speedily blossomed out into rapture.

To be sure, there was a strong persuasion to the credit of Jesus in the testimony of John the Baptist, whose self-effacing modesty gave the flavor of truth to everything he would say in another's behalf. It is much that some one in whom we have confidence bears witness to the facts of religion. Said an infidel lawyer, who out of curiosity had attended a meeting where Christian experience was being narrated, "I hold in my hand the testimony of more than sixty persons. They use different language, but they all testify to the same things. Many of these persons I know well. I would believe their word on any subject. Why should I not believe what they say about religion? There must be some truth in what they hold." But not even the witness of John the Baptist would be enough to convince Andrew without the confirmation wrought by his personal interview with Jesus. How this did it is difficult to explain. Sometimes when the soul can give the least satisfactory account of its convictions it holds to them most tenaciously. Said Emerson: "All my opinions, affections, whimsies are tinged with belief . . . But I can not give reasons to a person of a different persuasion that are at all adequate to the force of my convictions. Yet when I fail to find the reason, my faith is not less." When the organist touches the keynote of the building he makes the whole structure vibrate with the tip of his finger, and every person in it feels the weird thrill. When Christ speaks He sweeps the cords of our nature with a hand that awakens deep response. Every one has experienced the mysterious sensation who has been proximate to Him. In some such way these men realized the Divine power of Jesus.

He was not exactly what they expected in the Messiah. But all their preconceptions were borne aside by the charm of His presence. Said an Indian orator to Montcalm: "We wanted to see this famous man who tramples the English under his feet. We thought we should find him so tall that his head would be lost in the clouds. But you are a little man, my father. It is when we look into your eyes that we see the greatness of the pine tree and the fire of the eagle." By coming close

to Jesus Andrew and Philip sprang into immediate conviction that He was the Christ.

That ability to recognize Christ in His true character is a high endowment in any soul. Not every man who has turned his thought toward Jesus has been able to assign Him to His right place. Renan said, "I am the only man in my time who has understood the character of Jesus," and then wrote a life of the Nazarene which is a perfect travesty of His person. Multitudes have failed as completely to grasp the meaning of the Christ. But Andrew said, "We have found the Messias," and Philip said, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write"—and their joy was full.

Which is the fuller joy in life, the discovery of a great satisfaction, or the publishing of that discovery to others? Nearly always the sensations follow so fast upon one another that it is difficult to distinguish them. Still if one could not proclaim his discovery, half the joy of making it would be lost. "Rejoice with me; I have found the sheep that was lost!" cries the shepherd. "Rejoice with me; I have found the piece of silver that was lost!" exclaims the woman who had swept her house for the vagrant coin. "He went out, and began to publish it much, and to blaze abroad the matter," is written of a leper whom Jesus cleansed. "We have found the Messias!" cries Andrew to his brother. "And he brought him to Jesus." The exuberant spirit can not rest until his discovery has been made known to others. So the scientist feels when he has found a specific to conquer a hitherto fatal malady. So the poet feels when he has caught a vision of truth through the opening heavens. So the Christian feels when he has looked upon the face of the Christ, and has been transformed into His likeness. The venerable Bede dubbed Andrew "Introductor"—he introduced others to Jesus. There can be no higher function in life. "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."

SECTION II.

PERIOD OF UNDISTURBED ACTIVITY.

CHAPTERS II-IV.

We now enter upon the public ministry of Jesus, in which we have the self-manifestation of Christ's glory in works and words (1) during a period of undisturbed activity, (2) during a period of conflict, (3) during a period of transition and judgment, the whole being comprehended in Chapters II—XII. We first take up the period of comparative quiet, which constitutes the second section of Part I, including Chapters II—IV. Jesus is now slowly emerging into publicity. He has not yet awakened the furious hostility of the Jewish authorities. He manifests His glory by working miracles, by exercising spiritual sovereignty, by self-revelations to individuals, by discourses and interviews. These manifestations extend through the entire section, which may be divided as follows:

1. The Wedding at Cana.
2. The Cleansing of the Temple.
3. The Interview with Nicodemus.
4. The Final Testimony of John the Baptist.
5. The Interview with the Samaritans.
6. The Healing of the Nobleman's Son.

VI.

THE WEDDING AT CANA.

CHAPTER II. 1-12.

The first three evangelists give us diverse aspects of one glorious landscape. Saint John pours over that landscape a flood of heavenly sunshine, which seems to transfigure its very character, though every feature of the landscape remains the same.—*Farrar.*

First Work in Galilee.

"Works" and "words" are significant and definitive terms in this Gospel. Not only does John make great use of them, but Jesus Himself appeals to His deeds and His utterances as evidence of His divine character and mission. In Part I of His work John presents the testimony of works and words in the following particulars:

1. **Seven Notable Miracles** ("signs") are recorded in this section, viz.: Changing water into wine, healing of the nobleman's son, healing of the lame man at Bethesda, the feeding of the five thousand, walking on the sea, healing of man born blind, raising of Lazarus. The first two of these occur in this section, the period of comparative quiet. Though called *miracles* in the Authorized Version, they are really designated by John as "signs," and should always be so rendered. Used seventeen times in John's gospel, and always with the same purpose. At least four words in the New Testament translated *miracles* — "signs," "wonders," "works," "powers." Christ's miracles were in John's thought signs of His divine mission, and symbolical of spiritual truth.

2. **Certain Episodes or Incidents** which, while they are not miraculous, are nevertheless of the nature of "signs," and bear witness to Christ's character, as for example, the cleansing of the temple, the triumphal entry, and others.

3. **Certain Interviews or Conversations,** in which Jesus discloses His true character to individuals. Most important among these are the colloquies with Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman. In such interviews Jesus truly manifests His glory.

4. **Several Discourses.** John's Gospel is especially marked by the fullness and variety with which these are given. Notable examples are the Bread of Heaven, the Good Shepherd, the discussions in Jerusalem at the feasts. In these Jesus manifests His glory and in some instances evokes external testimony to His divine authority.

5. **Results of These Manifestations.** They produce on the part of some unbelief, developing into malignant opposition; on the part of others belief, developing into joyous testimony. All this is in harmony with the purpose of John's Gospel, as foreshadowed in the Prologue or Introduction (i, 1-18).

We are now to examine the first of these "signs," by which Jesus manifested His glory, producing belief on the part of His disciples.

I. THE FIRST SIGN (i. 1-12).

"There is an organic connection between the first chapter and the second. . . . The glory is declared in chapter one; the glory is manifested in chapter two." (*Strong.*)

1. **The First Sign is in the Home Circle.** Jesus enters sympathetically and joyously into the common life of men. He passes in this scene from the retirement, in which He has lived so long, into the publicity which marks His subsequent ministry. This beginning of miracles is in accord with the general plan

of Christ's kingdom, which comes without observation. It is in the circle of the family that He steps out into the perils of a public life.

2. **The First Sign is to Relieve a Necessity (3).** A friend in time of need. Embarrassment of the situation. Arrival of a half-dozen additional guests at a time when the supply of refreshments is running out. According to Eastern notions of hospitality this is a disgraceful calamity. The great day in the wedded pair's life. Jesus saves the situation, and blesses the company. Characteristic of Christ's miracles that they not only display His glory, but also are essentially humane and benevolent.

3. **The First Sign Marks Christ's Reluctance to Display Miraculous Power (4).** Also characteristic. Unwillingness to show power for the sole end of evoking wonder. Moreover, this would rush Him into publicity, absorbing service of a physical sort, immediate sacrifice of higher interests, and premature death. (*a*) The mother's solicitude (v. 3). With a woman's interest and sympathy, and a woman's anxiety to relieve a domestic embarrassment, she touches her great Son, of whose power she has had intimations, and of whose courtesy she has no doubt, and says, "They have no wine." (*b*) Christ's rejoinder (v. 4). "Woman," no term of contempt. Equivalent to "Lady." Perhaps a mild admonition, because she was innocently interfering in a region where she was not qualified to act. Might be rendered, "Mother, you must let Me act here in My own way, and My time for action has not yet come." (*Dods.*) The separation which is now setting in between His mother and Himself, so far as earthly relations are concerned, will continue until the crucifixion makes it complete.

4. **The First Sign Exhibits Christ's Lordship (5-10).** Mary's confidence in her Son survives the gentle rebuke (5). She knows His character. The help is given. They do "whatsoever He saith," and the

water pots of stone are filled to the brim with the choicest wine (10). The lordship of Jesus over nature is manifested in a three-fold way: He is shown to be the life of nature, He ennobles nature, He interprets nature.

II. SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FIRST SIGN.

1. **Criticism of the Story.** (1) Sometimes regarded as a mere parable, even asserted that what is intended is to show that the conversation of Jesus was so fascinating that the exhaustion of the wine was not noticed, or if noticed, not missed. This contradicts plain meaning of the narrative. (2) Omitted from other gospels. On the same ground there would be greater reason for rejecting the statement of Paul that Jesus appeared to five hundred persons at once after His resurrection. (1 Cor. xv, 6.) The fragmentary nature of the other gospels is to be taken into account. (3) Magical. Answer: Characteristic of magic that it dispenses with existing matter, but here Christ does not create, but transforms what already exists. (4) Useless. "A miracle of luxury," says one objector. "A miracle of love," says one defender. Not a parade of power. Excess not wasted, but remained a rich wedding gift to the pair. (5) Immoral. Conducing to intemperance. All God's gifts could be abused. The fed five thousand might have been gluttonous. Virtue consists not in being untempted, but in resisting temptation. The remark of the governor of the feast a crude pleasantry based on his own probable experience at similar feasts.

2. **Reflections of Christ's Glory in the Event.** (1) The sanctification of the home, of festivity, of marriage through Christ's presence and conduct which is not marked by asceticism like that of John the Baptist. Christ entered life to glorify it. (2) Produced profound impression upon His disciples. They "believed on Him." So shall all men when they behold Him furnishing the desolate and the sinning with all

that can console and sanctify their lives. (3) The munificence of Christ. A type of the fullness of grace and joy which Jesus, the Christ, the Son of God, brings to the earth.

Hymn No. 118.

Fairest Lord Jesus!
Ruler of all nature!
O Thou of man and God the Son!
Thee will I cherish,
Thee will I honor,
Thee, my soul's glory, joy, and crown.
—*From the German.*

Personal Questions:

1. Have I admitted Christ to my home, to sanctify all the joys of my household?

2. Have I learned to observe His mother's admonition, to do whatsoever He commands?

The Key to Conduct.

"Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it."—JOHN ii, 5.

One of Haydn's friends once asked him how it happened that his Church music was almost always of an animating, cheerful, and even festive quality. The great composer replied: "I can not make it otherwise. I write according to the thoughts I feel. When I think upon God my heart is so full of joy that notes dance and leap, as it were, from my pen; and since God has given me a cheerful heart, it will be easily forgiven me that I serve Him with a cheerful spirit."

It is noteworthy that Jesus enters upon His public career through the gateway of the most joyous social institution, and that during His entire ministry He manifested a cordial sympathy with the festive customs of the

people. To the mind familiarized with the tragic features of His life, and depressed by the tone of sadness which pervades much of His speech and action, the spectacle of Jesus mingling with the merry company in the gay intercourse of a wedding-feast, and joining freely in the jovial and light-hearted talk common to such an occasion, is a trifle disturbing. And if one is infected with the folly which makes asceticism a necessary accompaniment of the deepest piety, he will be somewhat puzzled by this apparent incongruity. But let him remember that Jesus possessed a complete human nature, that His participation in an event of almost hilarious human joy marks His perfect fellowship with men and women, that without occupying such a plane of equality with them He could have done little for their salvation, and that His presence at this feast has forever established the sanctity of marriage, the propriety of innocent festivity, and the fitness of religion to heighten the delights of society. Furthermore, is not the limitless extent of Christ's authority clearly set forth in the fact that the first exhibition of His miraculous power occurred in the domestic circle? He asserts Himself at the very center of the social organism. That means that He is Master everywhere.

An heroic statue of Prince Bismarck, surrounded by allegorical figures, rises in an immense square in Berlin to the west of the Reichstag Palace. The illustrious maker of united Germany stretches out his hand of bronze toward the massive structure, within which the elected representatives of the nation are legislating for the people, as if to caution and guide them in their deliberations. This is impressively apt, for it is known of all men that, though Bismarck has passed into the unseen world, his colossal genius still exercises sway over the destinies of the German commonwealth. In a nobler sense Jesus lifts Himself from the page of history, and discloses His eternal dominancy of the world. And the picture of His mother designating Him as the master of

a difficult and embarrassing situation is but a figure of the entire Christian community called the Church, whenever she is true to her divine commission, indicating Him as the final authority in all matters of faith and practice.

John Ruskin says at the close of one of his volumes: "This is the sum of all my writing, 'Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it.'" This should be both the essence and the substance of all Christian teaching. Christ's word is the ultimate test of belief and behavior. Christ's power and sympathy constitute man's sole reliance. Still a large share of Christendom is under the delusion that His mother possesses a kind of spiritual superiority, based upon her maternal relation to Him in the flesh. Yet in this very narrative Jesus is shown to avow His independence of her. "Woman, what have I do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come." Mariolatry is a fascinating form of devotion. The adoration of the Virgin finds warrant for those who use it in sentiments truly beautiful. But, how can reason or religion have any patience with the notion that Mary can secure extraordinary favors for her partisans, while she is constantly urging, "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it?" He is sufficient in Himself, requiring no corrective for His judgment, no stimulus for His sympathy, no supplement to His efficiency.

The present Kaiser said early in his reign, "Nothing must be done anywhere on the globe without the sanction of Germany's ruler." It was a boastful proclamation of the sovereign's faith in his own position as the lord of a world-power. His title to such pre-eminence may some day be in dispute, for governments are jealous; but Christ's authority in the spiritual domain is not open to question. His mastery is not only legitimate, but it admits of no rivalry. It is maintained not by force of arms, but by supremacy of moral power over the souls of men. Renan's words are true: "He is a thousand times more living, a thousand times more loved, than He was in His short passage through life. He presides still

day by day over the destiny of the world. He started us in a new direction, and in that direction we still move."

Some kind of authority for the guidance of life all conscientious persons are seeking. It would gratify many of them if they could obtain an authentic utterance directly from Heaven concerning every problem of life. They wish that a standard of moral weights and measures were available like that which the government has adopted for use of material commodities. John Fiske records the impressions of a little American girl in Paris, who said, "Every man here has to have some other man to see that he does what he ought to do." It sometimes seems that to have a monitor who would infallibly correct us when we wander from the truth, and mark out for us a wise procedure in every emergency, and advise us exactly how to meet every questionable suggestion, would be a great piece of fortune. If God would only write His will on the sky with intervolved lightning flashes in language we could read with ease, how satisfactory it would be! To ascertain the right which He desires us to choose, and to distinguish the wrong which he wishes us to avoid—here is a problem too complicated for us. Not if we heed the words of Mary, "Whatsoever He saith to you, do it." Nothing is to be done anywhere in the world of Christian activity without His sanction. Life is amazingly simplified when it is thus subordinated to the control of Christ. Intellectual difficulties melt away when the soul adopts Paul's policy of "bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." Questions of conduct are solved readily when one agrees that "Whether we live, we live unto the Lord, and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's."

It is unsafe to substitute any other method if we desire to reach ultimate authority. Can we not depend upon reason? Is not the mind a spectroscope to unbraid commingled truth and falsehood, to detect and analyze the qualities of things which lie remote from our hands,

to measure moral bulks and distances? Is not intellect, with its various functions, capable of making sure judgments? The world by wisdom knew not God." "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto Him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Grotesque fancies take hold of the best brains, and the closest reasoners may become the vilest livers.

Is not this moral instinct we call conscience an adequate authority for the conduct of life? In its normal state it is as delicate and sensitive as a balance which is turned by a fleck of dust or a drop of dew. It admonishes of evil; it speaks the praise of good. It makes the soul miserable in vice and happy in virtue. Is not this the voice of authority—determining duty and denouncing sin? But conscientious men have wrought terrible mischief in the earth. Paul thought himself a devout servant of God while hounding the followers of Christ to death. In all good conscience men have written damnable heresies in their books, and under the sanctions of religion have performed deeds of violence and shame.

Is not the Church our sufficient guide to faith and service? Called into being by the providence of God to be a perpetual witness to the truth, her leaders assumed to be inspired by the Holy Ghost, her councils working on in successive centuries to forge faith into perfect forms, her chief bishops exercising lordship over the consciences of men, the results of her work in the world evidencing the divinity of her mission—is not the Church an infallible source of authority? The Romanist would have us believe this. But does history confirm us in the judgment? What enormities have flourished under the white shield of the Church! It is an institution composed of fallible human beings, however holy may be its purpose. Governments derive their rights from God. Monarchs and magistrates are servants of the Most High. But how imperfectly they represent Him! Yet they are to be regarded with honor. So the Church is to be esteemed with veneration, but it can not be the

total reliance of those who seek final authority for the conduct of life.

Will not the Scriptures furnish us with the certitude we require? Can we not turn confidently to them for precise guidance in every exigency? Only as we place Christ above the written revelation, and interpret all that is recorded in the light of His person. Remember that sentences from the Bible have been used to buttress slavery, to intrench polygamy, to vindicate persecution, to establish superstition, to approve war, and to confirm errors and iniquities of every sort. Recognize the imperfectness of reason, the corruptibility of conscience, the fallibility of the Church, and observe how utterly impossible it is to depend upon any human interpretation of the Scriptures.

Reason must be corrected by the thought of Him "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Conscience must be clarified by Him who said, "I am the light of the world." The Church must be adjudged by the spirit of Him who said the gates of Hell should not prevail against it. The Bible must be interpreted by the words and works of Him who said of the Scriptures, "These are they which testify of Me." Christ is Himself the ultimate authority in the realm of the spirit. "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it."

When one of Verdi's great compositions was rendered for the first time in Florence, it was received with tremendous applause by the huge assembly which came to hear it. But the torrent of popular enthusiasm which swirled about him was not powerful enough to turn his gaze from the face of Rossini, who sat in the audience. Without that master's intelligent approval the tumult of the throng brought no happiness to his soul. Unless Christ says, "Well done!" we may regard our faith inadequate and our lives ineffective. But since He speaks in no audible voice to us, how can we know His commands, how determine the course He would have us pursue? The matter is not involved in deep perplexity.

Do we want to know His will? There is much in that. It is inconceivable that a man should study the Gospels, imbibe their spirit, follow their teachings, and live in communion with Him whose story they tell, and still fail to perceive the ideals on which life should be molded. Is it our fondest wish to live the life of Christ? That will settle every question fundamental to correct conduct and sound faith. It may not make blunders of judgment impossible, or protect the mind from minor and non-essential heresies, but it will enthrone vital truth in the soul, and keep life sweet and wholesome to the end. It is incredible that a man who lives in daily fellowship with Christ through the Spirit should not know what his Master desires him to do in relation to business, politics, society, pleasure, and the various concerns of common life. He may have no specific word touching the minute details of conduct, but he will have a governing principle covering every conceivable exigency, and the Divine mind will inspire and influence his judgment to a right decision. Those who enter into spiritual fellowship with the Master, and abide in that sacred comradeship, may say with St. Paul, "We have the mind of Christ." To secure the Divine point of view, and to be actuated by the Divine motives, is to make certain of the noblest character and the finest actions. In such a happy estate the words of Lowell have a deeper meaning than their original setting conveys:

> "'Tis as easy now for the heart to be true
> As for grass to be green or skies to be blue—
> 'T is the natural way of living."

VII.

CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE.

CHAPTER II. 13-21.

For, verily, beneath the tranquil surface of this Gospel, which is filled to so great an extent with what the Lord Himself said, are deep and fervid ocean-currents of holy life and love, which no one can undertake to explore and describe without being made to feel the dimness of His vision and the feebleness of His speech.—*Hovey.*

Work in Jerusalem—Commenced.

THE dark picture placed over against the bright, festal scene described in the former part of the chapter. Typical of John's method of artistic contrast and balance, of which he gives several striking instances. (1) The first of a series of episodes related by our author which, equally with His miracles, manifest the glory of Christ. (2) Compare this account with the similar event which occurred during the last Passover of Christ's ministry. Sufficient reasons for believing that the events are not identical. If they are one, either John or the other writers were in error as to chronology. The difficulty of believing that the temple was twice cleansed not great. The evil had a chance to return after the first spasm of reform had spent itself. Jesus would again express His indignation if this occurred. He would thus signalize both the beginning and the end of His ministry by an exhibition of the Messianic authority of His office. Differences in details also mark the two accounts. (Matt. xxi; Mark xi; Luke xix.) The words of Jesus on the two occasions are different. The situations are different. His own thought is apparently different. (3) The significance of this event as the opening or inauguration of Christ's public ministry. In Jerusalem, at the temple,

probably on the eve of the Passover. Here are foreshadowed Christ's authority, mission, enthusiasm, self-devotion. Also in bold relief the criticism and unbelief of His enemies, together with the deepening belief of His disciples. Here also anticipations of His rejection by the authorities and the destruction of the temple of His body.

I. THE IMPRESSIVE ACT (14-17).

1. **The Provocation (14).** The profanation of the Temple. The situation. Temple had three holy courts: that of the priests, which enclosed the sanctuary or temple proper; east of this the court of the men; east of this the court of the women. Around these courts was a vast open space, fourteen acres in extent, and separated from the inner courts by a wall breast high, and bearing warnings which prohibited encroachment of the Gentiles on pain of death. This outermost space was enclosed on four sides by colonnades, and was called the court of the Gentiles, the only part of the sacred place into which proselytes might enter. Here has been established by the connivance of the authorities a market or exchange, occupied by cattle dealers, sellers of doves, and money-changers. There were reasons for regarding this a legitimate convenience. Worshipers coming from a distance found it an accommodation to obtain here what they required for sacrifice. Moreover, money-changers were necessary. The annual tax of half a shekel paid to the Temple treasury could only be paid in the sacred currency, to avoid sacrilege of using money stamped with idolatrous symbols and foreign emblems implying submission to aliens. But flagrant abuses had crept in. The poor were disgracefully cheated. An extortionate rate of exchange was charged, sometimes ten or twelve per cent. Worshipers approaching would have the serenity of devotion rudely disturbed by shouts and wrangling of the traffickers. The thing had become a sore scandal, which no one had yet been bold enough to remedy.

2. **The Revolt of Christ's Moral Sense.** Into such a scene Jesus comes. He is shocked by the sights and sounds. Can not endure the profanation of His Father's house. The Temple more to Him than to these merchandizing traders. He feels Himself responsible for the removal of this scandal, not as a mere Jew, but as the King of the Jews. He is fully conscious of His Messianic dignity. What He said about His Father's house when He was twelve years old, conversing with the doctors in this very place. (Luke ii, 49.) Possibly some who heard Him now, had listened to Him then. Thoughts of His mind somewhat different on the two occasions. He will now assert His authority.

3. **His Dramatic Attack (15, 16).** Not content with mere denunciation, He accompanies His words with a symbolic action. Twists together a scourge and wields it above His head. Does not probably use it on the backs of the traders. The physical act would be disproportionate to the result. He prevails not because of blows, but because the consciences of the sinners yield to His authoritative manner. (1) The audacity of the deed. Find illustrative parallels in history. (2) His justification. The disciples remember a passage of Scripture (Psa. lxix, 9), and apply it at once in their minds. His righteous indignation. The pious zeal of the Master. He could do nothing less. A bad thing requires a drastic remedy. Just when every Jew is purifying himself for the feast, Jesus in the exercise of His Messianic rights will purify the Temple, His Father's house.

II. THE CONSEQUENCES (18-22).

1. **An Explanation Demanded (18).** The natural consternation of the temple authorities. Who is this invader of our privileges? How will He authenticate His deed? "What sign showest Thou unto us?" they ask. Characteristic of the Pharisees, who could never apparently see that Christ's works and words

were self-authenticating, as John is always contending. They were His sufficient credentials. The profane crowd falling back before the calm majesty of Christ an adequate evidence of His authority.

2. **Christ's Enigmatical Response (19, 20).** Why given in such a form? Not intended to be understood. Christ never works a wonder to satisfy curiosity. Used as an accusation against Him at the end of His life. (Matt. xxvi, 61; Mark xiv, 58.) They misunderstood His meaning. Preposterous, they feel, that He should be able to raise up this temple, which had already been forty-six years building, in three days. Find other illustrations of both ignorant and willful misunderstanding on the part of Christ's enemies.

3. **Interpretation of the Response (21).** John gives it himself. No occasion to look farther. The temple of His body. A deep and significant response.

4. **Subsequent Effect on the Disciples (22).** After Christ's resurrection they remembered this day, and its great utterance. Their faith confirmed. Their conviction of Christ's true character deepened.

Hymn No. 355.

Come, almighty to deliver,
Let us all Thy grace receive;
Suddenly return, and never,
Never more Thy temples leave.
—*Charles Wesley.*

Personal Questions:

1. Have I surrendered the temple of my nature to Jesus?

2. Has He expelled from the sanctuary of my soul all that offends His will?

The Finest Temple in the World.

"He spake of the temple of His body."—JOHN ii, 21.

Said Novalis: "There is but one temple in the world, and that is the body of man. Nothing is holier than this high form. Bending before men is reverence done to this revelation in the flesh. We touch Heaven when we lay our hands on a human body." That conception has the flavor of novelty in the minds of too many persons, but it was not original with Novalis. Jesus "spake of the temple of His body," and He was probably the first in human history to employ that impressive figure of speech. The ancients had regarded the body as the seat of evil and the most obstinate enemy of a righteous life. Two schools of philosophy had long been contending for universal patronage when Jesus appeared among men: the Epicurean, which taught that the sensations were all that could be reckoned in man, and whose founder placed over the portal of his garden where he instructed his disciples the words, "Here pleasure is the highest good;" and the Stoics, who taught that all the instincts of nature were to be crushed and effaced until the individual had been reduced to a perfect state of apathy. From neither of these doctrines could an exalted estimate of the dignity of the human body be expected. But Jesus "spake of the *temple* of His body."

The persistence of wrong conceptions of human life is remarkable. The Epicureans and Stoics have their representatives among us to this day. On the one hand are the lovers of fleshly indulgence, who find their highest good in the excitements of the flesh, in meat and drink, in diversions and sports; and on the other hand are the ascetics, who frown at all pleasure, suffocate every natural propensity, deny themselves all gratification of the physical appetites, and take a melancholy satisfaction in every kind of self-suppression. In each of these cases the body is abused. In the one instance it is debased by sensuality, in the other it is disgraced by con-

tempt. The roué, the debaucheé, the libertine, the frivolous devotee of pleasure show us the wickedness of the one; the hermit, the anchorite, the Hindu fakir who starves and shrivels his body to prove his saintliness, men like Simeon Stylites who undergo voluntary suffering to subordinate the body to the spirit, show us the folly of the other. But Jesus "spake of the *temple* of His body."

The temple, observe, must neither be profaned by wickedness nor disgraced by idleness. It is to be used, and to be used for a holy purpose. It is the shrine in which God desires to reside. That fact imparts the highest dignity to human life. Men have often been willing to give God a share of their being, but in the thought of Jesus the body is the actual temple of God. That conception has been worked out with much fidelity by the apostle Paul, who reminds his readers repeatedly that they are the temples of the Holy Ghost, and that to profane their bodies is the most deadly species of sacrilege. (1 Cor. iii, 16; vi, 19, 20; 2 Cor. vi, 16.) The idea is now a part of the common belief of Christians, and is for that reason in danger of losing its majestic power. For, as Coleridge well says: "Truths, of all others the most awful and interesting, are too often considered as so true, that they lose all the power of truth, and lie bed-ridden in the dormitory of the soul, side by side with the most despised and exploded errors."

A local habitation for God is a conception at which philosophy may sneer, but which the limitations of the finite mind seem to require, not only in the infancy of the race, but in the most progressive stages of human development. The declaration that God is everywhere, while it fills the soul with wonder and awe, is disposed to turn the mind to Pantheism—the theory that God is everything—or to an abstraction which virtually asserts that God is nothing. An accommodation to the needs of man's thought has been made in the divine revelation. The fiery, cloudy pillar, ever lifting its majestic form above the moving hosts of Israel, became to them the

visible habitation of Jehovah, toward which they constantly turned their eyes and their supplications. The Tabernacle, with its sacred furniture and its holy shrine, became in due season the tangible abode of the living God, toward which Israel directed pious thoughts and heavenly aspirations. The glittering Temple which superseded the Tabernacle, rising with matchless splendor from Mount Moriah, at length became the local habitation of that God who through many centuries of warfare had finally led His people to a fixed national existence. Without a visible temple men have instinctively lifted their faces upward and away from the earthly wilderness to that Holy of Holies above the clouds, from the glories of which we are separated by the thin veil of the flesh. But with the advent of Jesus Christ came a new revelation. The cloudy pillar has faded into invisibility. The Tabernacle has moved beyond human ken. The veil of the Temple has been rent in twain, and God has chosen humanity for His visible habitation. The irresistible proof of God's existence is that "He dwelleth in us."

The dignity thus conferred upon humanity is incomparably great. Upon the ancient Tabernacle, under the constraint of Divine inspiration, the largest wealth which a nomad people could command was piously bestowed. A single piece of its furniture—the golden candlestick—has been computed at a value of not less than $25,000, while the whole structure has been estimated at $1,250,000. Such honor did God desire to impart to His visible abode. The magnificence of Solomon's Temple, with its cedars from the forests of Lebanon, its walls of vast hewn-stone faced with gold, its ceilings of fir-trees, its pillars of brass, its sacred vessels of gold, its rich hangings, its golden pavements, its gorgeous ceremonies, its lavish sacrifices, is memorable above any building in the world. Costly sanctuaries still have their office in religious worship. Vast cathedrals yet eloquently proclaim the sovereignty and holiness of God. But they are only symbols of the sublimer temples in which Deity is en-

shrined. Not all the religious sects in the world could justly point to an edifice on which they had bestowed incalculable treasures of money and genius as the supreme temple of God. Cleansed humanity now enjoys greater distinction than could be conceived to invest the old Tabernacle, the Temple at Jerusalem, and the noblest ecclesiastical structures of all time. It is not without commendable reverence that men walk with bowed heads through the solemn aisles of great temples, adorned with every enrichment which human genius prompted by simple devotion can provide. But with how much profounder veneration ought we to regard renewed humanity, since more truly in this temple of clay than in any sculptured pile God dwells and pours forth His glory.

The responsibility of caring for such a temple of the Lord is commensurate with the dignity thus conferred upon men. With what appropriate jealousy did the ancient Jew defend his temple against the encroachments of unholy men. When Ptolemy Philopator entered Jerusalem, after having subdued Judea, and attempted to force his way into the sanctuary, he was repelled by Simon the high priest. But when the profane conqueror still persisted, and seemed likely to accomplish his wicked purpose, the whole city gave itself up to such a tumult of wailing that the very walls and pavements seemed to shriek out their protest against the proposed sacrilege, and Ptolemy, seized with an extraordinary awe and horror, trembled like a reed before the wind, and fell speechless to the earth. No records are more replete with narratives of daring and sacrifice than those which recite the constant struggle maintained by the Jews against their enemies, in that last period of their history before the advent of Jesus, to prevent the spoliation of their temple. Many are the instances in which they surrendered their lives with the glorious satisfaction of martyrs in defense of the holy place. Such an enthusiasm for the sanctity of the human temple ought to characterize every Christian.

Alas! what numerous foes attempt to despoil the sanctuary of the Holy Ghost! Through the gateway of the eye, which is calculated to be the avenue of approach for the beautiful and the pure, may throng evil impressions enough in one hour to degrade a soul forever. Through the open portals of the ear may surge a legion of devils to despoil the purity of life. Through all the senses of the body and all the highways of the mind the lust of the world and the pride of life make their baleful entrance. What powers of defense, what dauntlessness of spirit, are required to protect the temple of God!

History tells us that when Hyrcanus had failed in his ambitious schemes he fled beyond the Jordan, and at a place not far from Heshbon erected a great castle made of white marble. This he adorned without and within in the most sumptuous manner, and surrounded it with a deep fosse. But not one of the doors of entrance or communication was wider than would admit one man at a time, lest the master should be surprised by his enemies. At each of these approaches a faithful warder could be stationed, and the owner of the stronghold might thus rest in almost perfect security. Would that men could thus shut themselves against the surprises of sinful propensities played upon by the seductions of the flesh, and be protected from the powers of ill that are all abroad. But this is impossible. We are in the world, and here must we tarry until God removes us to an atmosphere of unsullied purity. Meanwhile let it be our anxious care that every entrance to the inner life be guarded against the least approach of sin. And this will be no small task, for the Adversary of souls is eager to usurp the throne of the Most High. He is "the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God."

When Antiochus Epiphanes, one of the most dastardly characters in history, captured the city of Jeru-

salem he entered every court of the temple, pillaged the treasury, seized all the sacred utensils, the golden candlestick, the table of shew-bread and the altar of incense. He then commanded a great sow to be sacrificed upon the altar of burnt-offering, a part of the flesh to be boiled and the liquor from the unclean animal to be sprinkled over every portion of the temple; and thus he desecrated with the most horrid defilement the sacred place which for centuries had been considered by the Hebrews the holiest spot in all the universe. Two years later the sanctuary which had always been regarded the dwelling place of Jehovah, and sacred alone to Him, was dedicated by the authority of this infamous man to the pagan god Jupiter Olympius, and a statue of that deity was erected upon the altar of burnt-offering. Thus would Satan sweep into the sacred enclosure of the soul and defile it with his own pestilential presence. And such a flagrant profanation he accomplishes in every degraded human character. Not in an hour or a day is this kind of destruction completed, but by slow and steady reaches into the center of the soul's sanctity is the dreadful ruin achieved. Let the first approach of the seducer be repelled. No compromise is permissible.

But, if into any life influences of evil have begun to creep, there is a Power by whom the temple may be cleansed. The Spirit of God, whose sovereignty in the bosom of Jesus made it possible for the Master to drive the sacrilegious horde from the Father's house, which they had turned into a den of thieves, if appealed to in any exigency, will swiftly sweep the despoiler from the temple of clay.

Doré's great picture of the punishment of Heliodorus, who was dispatched by King Seleucus to capture the incalculable treasures which were laid up in the Jewish Temple, will illustrate the vengeance which God will mete out to the enemies of purity. Though the whole city was in an agony of apprehension, and the high priest was in the deepest distress, the royal officer ad-

vanced to plunder the splendid temple. Suddenly a horse with a terrible rider, clad in golden armor, rushed into the courts and trampled upon Heliodorus with his fore-feet. Two young men of great strength and beauty, and gloriously attired, stood by the rider and scourged the intruder with great violence. At the sight of the awful apparition Heliodorus fell half-dead upon the pavement, and was carried senseless from the precincts of the sanctuary. Thus, so tradition has it, by supernatural interposition was the holy temple delivered of its defiler. Thus we may be assured by Divine help, if God be invoked, shall iniquity be expelled from the life it has seized for destruction.

The body of Jesus is the archetype of every renewed human life. "He spake of the temple of His body." He was conscious of the Divine presence. It is the privilege of every man to be joyously aware of the same sublime possession. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" Augustine says, "Dost thou wish to pray in a temple? Pray in thyself. But first *be* a temple of God." Faber's lines express the immeasurable truth, which every Christian may realize for himself:

But God is never so far off
  As even to be near.
He is within; our spirit is
  The Home He holds most dear.

To think of Him as by our side
  Is almost as untrue
As to remove His throne beyond
  Those skies of starry blue.

So all the while I thought myself
  Homeless, forlorn, and weary,
Missing my joy I walk the earth,
  Myself God's sanctuary.

VIII.

INTERVIEW WITH NICODEMUS.

CHAPTER II. 23—III. 21.

The Gospel of the world, resolving reason into intuition and faith into sight.—*Westcott.*

Work in Jerusalem—Continued.

John prefaces this episode with a statement of the general situation in Jerusalem after the cleansing of the Temple (ii, 23-25). The interview with Nicodemus which follows is a particular instance of the effects produced by the works of Jesus in the capital. It illustrates also the mental attitude of the best Jews in the city. It affords a fine example of Christ's discourses with individuals. With it may be profitably compared the interview with the Samaritan woman in Chapter IV.

1. **Time and Occasion.** In Jerusalem, at the Passover, during the Feast. The whole people are assembled in greater numbers than at any other time of the year, and at the place which God had chosen. Anniversary of the birth of the nation. Celebration both patriotic and religious. Opportune time for a manifestation of Christ's glory. "Many believed in His name when they saw the miracles which He did" (23).

2. **A False Faith.** They were disposed to believe they had found the Messiah, but they grounded their faith in Christ's supernatural works, not in the character of His person. The "signs" which He was habitually performing impressed them, but the faith which rested on marvels would fail when the marvels were discontinued. Consider the relative value of mir-

acles in our own day as an attestation of the divinity of Christ.

3. **The Distrust of Jesus (24).** Jesus did not "commit" Himself. Same word translated "believe" in verse 23. A justifiable rendering would be: "Many trusted in His name, . . . but He did not trust them." Compare Chap. vi, 14, where Jesus declined the homage of people springing from false hopes and beliefs, also Matt. vii, 21-23. This faith arose out of astonishment. True faith is inward and moral.

4. **The Insight of Jesus (24, 25).** "He knew what was in man." Instances of His superior knowledge: Peter (i, 42); Nathanael (i, 47, 48); Nicodemus (iii, 3); Samaritan woman (iv, 29); Disciples (vi, 61, 64); Judas (vi, 70; xiii, 11); Thomas (xx, 27); Peter (xiii, 38; xxi, 17). The Creator knew His creatures, and needed no one to instruct Him. Perhaps John lays no emphasis here upon the omniscience of Jesus, but implies that His supernatural knowledge was in a measure analogous to our own.

THE CONVERSATION CONCERNING THE KINGDOM (iii, 1-21).

Two queries have arisen touching this passage, viz.: Have we here the exact language of Jesus where He is reported as speaking, and is the latter portion of this discourse the speech of Christ, or the comment of John? In reply to the first it may be said, that certain utterances are so far above the intelligence of man that they could not have been invented, and are so sharp and sententious that they could not have been forgotten when once heard. There is also the fact of inspiration to be taken into account. See John xiv, 26. Yet the personality of the writer was not effaced by inspiration, and the record may have been colored in some degree by John's literary style. But it is to be remembered that one so close to Jesus as was John would inevitably acquire the Master's modes of expression,

and would thus naturally report Him with great verbal fidelity. As to the second query, it has been held by some that this passage consists of two parts: first, the actual conversation of Christ with Nicodemus (1-15); second, the commentary of John upon this conversation (16-21). Others contend that Jesus is speaking throughout. It seems improbable that John would change from Christ's words to his own without marking the transition in some plain way. It is at least permissible to divide the passage into two portions: first, the conversation about the new birth; and second, the relation of Christ's person to this doctrine.

I. THE NEW BIRTH (1-12).

This is the first of those discourses, both private and public, which form so important a part in this gospel, and which constitute one of its finest characteristics.

1. **The Interlocutor's Position (1).** Nicodemus an excellent example of those who had a certain measure of faith in Jesus because of His miracles. Jesus reads Him without an interpreter, as John has already declared He can do with any man. Jesus did not trust Himself to him at the first, though in the course of the interview He did unveil Himself to a great degree, in consequence of which we have a wonderful deliverance on a most fundamental theme.

2. **His Plausible Approach (2).** A certain amount of complacency in His manner. Begins with a compliment. May have been influenced by the report which the deputation from the Sanhedrin had brought back from their visit to John the Baptist. Admits that Jesus is entitled to the name "rabbi," not technically, of course, as He has not pursued the rabbinical curriculum, but evidencing a kind of divine authentication. The common people, it might be presumed, would misunderstand Him, but the Pharisees would

perceive the significance of His work, and were not unkindly disposed toward Him.

3. **Christ's Check (3).** He is perhaps shocked at the ruler's lack of spiritual insight. Christ has not come to continue the old order, but to establish a new one. Therefore breaks in upon the placidity of Nicodemus with His "Verily, verily, I say unto you." Birth from above is the prerequisite for entrance into the kingdom. "From above" instead of "again," say scholars generally. Thrice elsewhere John uses the word in this sense, and it is natural to suppose he does here, and this meaning accords with the phrase "born of God" in i, 13. It is possible, however, to render it, "from the beginning," "anew," "afresh." In any case a new start is signified, without which even perception of the kingdom of God is impossible, much less entrance into it. This is philosophical; for, since the kingdom is spiritual, our natural powers can not apprehend it. The phrase, "kingdom of God," occurs only once in this gospel, here and in verse 5, though it is very common in the others. Probably the exact phrase used by Christ on this occasion. It signifies the theocracy, "the new state of salvation." (*Plummer.*) Jesus, not a mere enthusiast, seeking followers, or he would not have turned so valuable a prospective adherent aside with the declaration that he who believes merely on the strength of miracles can not see the kingdom of God.

4. **The Ruler's Attempt to Parry (4).** Did Nicodemus ask this question for the purpose of reducing Christ's statement to an absurdity? Or, not knowing what to say, did he propound a foolish inquiry? Or did he honestly desire to bring out the amazing difficulties of the doctrine? New birth as a figure of regeneration was not unknown to such a man. Still the problem is a great mystery. It is impossible to conceive of a physical rebirth; is it easier to think of a spiritual rebirth? Can a man's whole life be altered at one stroke?

5. **Christ's Reaffirmation (5).** "Verily, verily" always introduces some profound truth drawn from Christ's inner divine consciousness. "Water and spirit" typify purification and spiritual quickening; one an external act involving an internal change—baptism and repentance—the other an internal operation involving external changes—the vitalizing of the Holy Spirit, which will manifest itself in an altered life. Without these two in reality no man can enter the kingdom of God. No exclusive dependence upon a rite or ordinance is suggested, however, as the case of the penitent thief on the cross will show.

6. **The Rational Ground of the Doctrine (6-8).** To the "flesh" belongs all that constitutes the life of sensation. That life is tainted with sinful inheritances and propensities. What is received from above is a nature essentially spiritual and endowed with heavenly aspirations and capacities. The one can not pass into the other. There must be a birth from above. Nicodemus does not understand the Spirit's activity. The mysteriousness of this process is no reason for discrediting it, any more than the inexplicable operations of nature make them incredible. Christ's illustration perhaps suggested by the wind swirling through the streets of Jerusalem, the sound of which reaches their ears. The evidence of the mysterious working of the Spirit is found in the effects produced in human lives.

7. **The Puzzled Ruler (9-12).** Bewildered but silent, impressed but unconvinced. "Perhaps, perhaps, but how?" Jesus professes amazement at this. The Jewish theology, in which Nicodemus is presumed to be instructed, ought to have prepared him for such a doctrine. If this teaching, which refers to things occurring on earth, though proceeding from above, is incomprehensible, what will the teaching of deeper things concerning eternal life be to him?

II. RELATION OF CHRIST'S PERSON TO THIS DOCTRINE (13-21).

1. **The Source of This Teaching.** The Son of man, who though He was in heaven has descended to the earth to bring this knowledge to men (13).

2. **The Nature of His Mission.** He must be lifted up, as Moses lifted up the brazen serpent in the wilderness, that men may look on Him and have eternal life (14, 15).

3. **The Motive of This Mission.** Divine love for humanity; a passion for the salvation of men which will not stop short of the utmost expenditure (16).

4. **Its Historic Completion (17-19).** The advent of Christ to be the Savior of men, who will believe in Him unto eternal life. This life is awarded not to those who merely believe in "signs," but to those who trust in the crucified Messiah.

5. **Cause of Apparent Failure.** Men love darkness rather than light when their deeds are evil. Those who are evil shun the light because they do not wish to have their wickedness exposed. Those who are good seek the light because they wish their deeds to be made manifest as inspired of God (20, 21).

Hymn No. 292.

O what amazing words of grace
Are in the gospel found!
Suited to every sinner's case,
Who knows the joyful sound.
—*Samuel Medley.*

Personal Questions:

1. Have I entered the kingdom of God?
2. Do I believe this teaching of Jesus?
3. Does God's love constrain me?

The Secret of the Kingdom.

"Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?"—JOHN iii, 10.

Boswell informs us that he once asked Johnson if there was good conversation at a dinner which the great man had attended the preceding day. "No, sir," said Johnson, "we had talk enough, but no conversation—there was nothing discussed."

In the interview which forms the basis of our present meditation there was a serious attempt at discussion by one of the parties to the conversation, who quickly found it necessary to drop into the position of a pupil receiving instruction from a master.

Many of Christ's most wonderful messages were delivered in the colloquial form. It is customary to characterize Jesus as a great preacher, and to ascribe to Him the temperament of the orator and the instincts of the poet. For such assertions there is ample justification in the published words of our Lord. But He was essentially a talker with men. While some of His utterances are so arranged as to give the appearance of connected discourse, scarcely any of these fulfills the requirements of set speech, with logical framework, systematic development, and rhetorical conclusion; and they were described by the speaker himself as "these sayings of mine."

Fortunately the professional interviewer did not ply his art in Christ's day, or we might be puzzled with distorted narratives of the Master's conversations. Public men in our time are constantly protesting that the zealous reporter has placed on their lips language they never dreamed of uttering and sentiments which they do not entertain. The case might have been no less disturbing if we had received formal accounts of the conversations of Jesus. But the evangelists have apparently preserved for us the residuum which memory strained off from the mass of Christ's deliverances to which they listened, the Holy Spirit having guided their minds to make such a

selection of the Master's words as should be sufficient for our instruction.

There is obviously no attempt to secure the effect of climax. Whatever dramatic power is apparent in Christ's conversations springs from the subject matter and the circumstances under which it was delivered. There is such evident artlessness in the form of these interviews as to make it impossible for us to suppose they were arranged with a view to their effect upon those who should afterward read them. In the conversation before us we have the setting forth of one of the great fundamental doctrines of our faith. To feel the spirit of the occasion and to enter into the meaning of Christ's discourse, let us examine the situation out of which this colloquy ensued.

The dignitary who came to see Jesus was a person of great significance. "There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews." The fact of his ecclesiastical position is announced before his name is given, as though it were a matter of large moment, and indeed it is a thing which must be kept constantly before our minds. According to the conception of the Pharisees, every Jew who was a true Israelite, exhibiting the legal virtues in his life, possessed in this fact the right of membership in the Messianic Kingdom, an institution which they fancied would be the old theocracy restored with all its material power and circumstantial glory. Possibly Nicodemus suspected that if Jesus were not the predicted Messiah, He was at least the harbinger of the anticipated revolution out of which the new kingdom would issue. Jesus was under the scrutiny of the Pharisees who were secretly studying His personality and pretensions. They would come to no determination touching His claims until they had made an exhaustive investigation of His words and works, but Nicodemus resolved to ascertain for himself, by a personal interview with Jesus, both the real character of the man and the probability of the success or failure of His mission.

As a member of the Sanhedrin, a man of wealth and

influence, belonging, as one might say, to the supreme court of the Jewish people, the functions of which were both civil and ecclesiastical, he was in a position to help or hinder the cause of the new leader of his people. He would cautiously inquire into the methods of this Galilean peasant-prophet; he would estimate the worth of the man. If he were convinced that the plans of Jesus were sane, and gave any promise of success, he would quietly attach himself to the movement which Jesus was inaugurating, and would then render to Him such advice as his age and experience qualified him to proffer.

Under cover of darkness Nicodemus makes his way to the place where Jesus is being entertained. This fact has sometimes been used to prove him a coward—a charge which can not be justly brought against him. A man who would risk his position by seeking an interview with Jesus, under any circumstance; a man who protested at a later day that Jesus ought not to be condemned to death without a proper trial; a man who, when Jesus had been crucified as an enemy to the State, dared to join with Joseph of Arimathea in securing for the dead agitator an honorable burial, can not reasonably be denounced as craven in spirit. He simply exercises the natural caution of a public man whose every word and deed passes under the scrutiny of the authorities.

It is the Passover Week and Jerusalem is crowded with people from all parts of Palestine. We may suppose it to be a windy night from the figurative allusion subsequently made by Jesus. The Passover moon is flooding the city with its silvery tide. The venerable ruler of the Jews partially conceals his face in the folds of his mantle, and hurries on as unostentatiously as possible to the place where Jesus is staying. We can see him climbing up the outer staircase which leads to the upper room set apart as a guest chamber in an Oriental house. We can fancy the salutations which occur as Nicodemus enters the place, and we can feel deeply the dramatic intensity of the

moment when the grave and reverend ruler confronts the youthful, but serene peasant of Galilee, who shows in the calm depth of His placid countenance the steady purpose of a soul inspired by a sublime mission. The scene is an impressive one, and if Nicodemus could have realized its significance his first utterance would have halted on his lips.

Once when a company of congenial spirits were discussing their probable sensations if some of the greatest characters who formerly lived among men should enter their presence, Charles Lamb stammered out: "You see, if Shakespeare came into this room, we should all arise; if Christ appeared, we should all kneel." Every devout person who acknowledges the true quality of Christ's person will sympathize with this beautiful sentiment, but to Nicodemus Jesus bore no marks of divinity. Nevertheless the venerable man is compelled to acknowledge the superiority of the person whom he has essayed to interrogate. He therefore opens the conversation by a gentle recognition of the power which Jesus had been exercising in His extraordinary way. "We know that Thou art a teacher come from God, O Master, for no man can do these miracles that Thou doest except God be with him. Of course, you have not been trained in the schools, and you occupy no official position, but you have an authority which is higher than any which these can give. You have an unquestionably Divine attestation."

At this point Jesus interrupts. He is not offended at what may seem to be an attempt to flatter Him, for Nicodemus has not undertaken to patronize the Master by words of studied adulation; he is simply expressing in terms of moderation a certain deference for the remarkable Person whose wonderful works have been brought to his attention. But Jesus knows that the conceptions of the kingdom of God which exist in the mind of Nicodemus are constructed upon those traditions which the teachers of Israel have for centuries been propagating; and He virtually says to the ruler of the Jews: "My dear sir, you are not in a position to enter the kingdom

of God, you do not even understand this kingdom; in fact, you can not perceive the kingdom of God. Before you can have any just notion of this kingdom you will need to be born again. It will be necessary for you to begin life anew. The kingdom of God can not be inherited; the fact that you belong to the aristocracy of the Hebrews does not entitle you to membership in the kingdom. You can not buy the kingdom; you can not earn the kingdom. There is no necessary relation between the political drama which you have conceived and the kingdom of God. Your very nature must be transformed before you can have any sympathy with the kingdom of God. You must be born again."

How many people living in our own time require a similar readjustment of their views concerning the kingdom of God? They imagine that this kingdom is to be established by some kind of revolution. They can not see that midnight meetings to plan an overthrow of existing conditions are utterly abortive, or that the use of material agents is perfectly futile. Like Maxim Gorky, and men of his ilk, who are unwilling to see in any concession of the Russian autocracy an approximation to liberty which may eventually lead to the freedom of their people, they fail to discover that by a quiet, persistent influence the kingdom of God is finally to prevail. That kingdom does not come by observation. It is not set up as a consequence of insurrection. It does not emerge from a tumult. Jesus was compelled constantly to insist on the unobtrusive, continuous influence of His kingdom. The figure of the leaven which a woman hid in the dough she was fashioning into bread was intended to fasten this principle in the minds of Christ's disciples. There are persons who fancy that some swift, radical cataclysm must suddenly thrust the kingdom of God as a conquering power upon the world. Nothing can be more foreign to the genius of our religion.

Such persons need to be reminded that mere externals have little to do with the real kingdom. We could go

on erecting vast structures of ecclesiastical authority, and never by this means usher in the kingdom of God with power. Protestants are deluded by the fallacy we are considering. They are frightened at the spreading of the Roman communion. They see its political power—its wisdom in the building of churches and schools, its skill in seizing upon strategic points, and they covet this ability and astuteness, and wish that Protestantism could emulate this example. But we might capture the seats of all governments, plant universities in all capitals, put our hands on all the sources and secrets of statecraft, lay hold of all the treasures of the earth in the name of Christianity, compel all the nations of men to acknowledge our sovereignty, yet not have the kingdom of God. The kingdom is one of spiritual ideals and spiritual achievements. A lot of rude huts strung along the Ganges, filled with Hindus serving God out of pure hearts, would come nearer to being the kingdom of God than an aggregation of costly cathedrals, shining with precious gems, filled with fragrant incense, but devoid of spiritual power, and mere monuments of ecclesiastical authority.

If men can not *see* the kingdom of God which "is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost," it is very evident that they can not *enter* the kingdom of God. That specific qualification is essential to perceiving the kingdom of God is in harmony with the very constitution of human life. Spiritual things are spiritually discerned, as all things of a finer essence are only understood by those who are themselves refined. That a man is an excellent blacksmith does not qualify him to appreciate the music of Beethoven, or the pictures of Raphael, or the poetry of Homer. There is a vast difference in the power of souls to appreciate the larger and deeper revelations of beauty in nature and in art. Superficial persons will gaze upon some wonder of creation, such as a towering mountain, or the majestic ocean, or a vast abyss, and express their ad-

miration in terms so puerile as to show that their emotions are as light as foam. But a great scientist like Sir David Brewster, looking upon the wing of a tiny insect, will exclaim, "O God, how marvelous are Thy works!"

A woman was one day discussing with a man the probable meaning of one of the most obscure passages in the works of Robert Browning. The man contended that his interpretation must be correct, since he was on terms of intimacy with the poet, and understood his spirit and motive. This the woman was at length willing to admit, but when the man reproached her with the childishness of her faith in the teachings of Christianity, she retorted: "You must remember that I know the Author of the Christian religion, and can therefore understand His teachings as no stranger can." It does not tax one's intelligence therefore to accept the statement of Jesus that no man can understand the kingdom of God until by some spiritual transformation he has come into harmony with the inner life of that kingdom. "Ye must be born again," is the most logical thing Jesus could have told Nicodemus, if the ruler of the Jews was sincere in his purpose to ally himself with the kingdom of God.

"How can a man be born again? You certainly can not mean a second natural birth; that is plainly an absurdity," exclaims Nicodemus. "Nevertheless," responds Jesus, "I mean precisely what I say; except a man be born of water, and of the spirit, he can not enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; that which is born of the spirit is spirit. Until the fleshly life has been by Divine power transformed into a spiritual life there can be no entrance into the kingdom." Nicodemus need not to have been unduly astonished at this reference to water and the spirit. He was fairly familiar with the baptism of John. He knew that the sacred rite performed by the prophet of the Jordan was a symbol of repentance, without which act of turning away from sin there could be no acceptance with God. No ultra-Protestants could believe that the touching of

our persons with water, accompanied by some verbal formula, would be effective in re-creating our moral natures; but we can easily credit a statement, that without the penitence which is assumed to attend the act of baptism, there could be no regeneration of life; and, that the vital touch of the Divine Spirit is essential to the quickening of new impulses, the creating of new aspirations, and the producing of a changed life, is a proposition which we can receive without the slightest hesitation, and which Nicodemus ought to have apprehended without difficulty.

We know that our trend is not uniformly toward God. Frequently our fleshly nature swings us in the direction of evil, and we find it more congenial to our tastes to yield to temptation than to resist the suggestion of the lower life, until we have been regenerated by Divine grace, sanctified by the Holy Spirit, and filled with power of God. It is this transformed life which constitutes the ability to perceive, and the privilege to enter, the kingdom of God. The old self must be abandoned, the old sins obliterated, the old man crucified, the old nature cleansed. Then the kingdom will possess us.

A frightfully wicked woman working in one of the great paper mills of Glasgow was converted through the efforts of a city missionary, and became a person of great devoutness of character. She described the process of her salvation in these terms: "I was like the rags that go into the paper mill. They are torn and filthy, but they come out clear, white paper. That is like what Jesus is doing for me." That is, indeed, the work which the great Redeemer is doing for millions of our race. That is the method by which the kingdom of God is being made triumphant in the earth.

IX.

FINAL TESTIMONY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.

CHAPTER III. 22-36.

These brief sentences . . . as inexhaustible in thought as they are inartificial in language.—*Maclaren.*

Work in Judea.

Repelled by the authorities in the Temple, finding little promise in the city, Jesus withdraws to the rural part of Judea, and tarries awhile with His disciples before retreating into Galilee. Under such circumstances occurs the final and self-effacing testimony of John the Baptist.

1. The Occasion of the Testimony (22-26).

(1) *Apparent Competition of Jesus and John the Baptist* (23, 24). The disciples of Jesus were baptizing, not the Master (iv, 2), He was baptizing through His disciples. Meanwhile John continues his own work. He had noticed that Jesus had not proceeded to assert His Messianic authority, and therefore felt that his own mission was not yet completed. Hence he went on baptizing unto repentance. Probably the two companies were not far apart. The location of Ænon has not been perfectly identified. "John was not yet cast into prison," is a sidelight on the accounts of the other evangelists.

(2) *The Discussion which Arose* (25, 26). With "a Jew" instead of "the Jews," probably, as some readings have it. The dispute may have been with re-

gard to the value of John's baptism as compared with that of Christ, touching the matter of ceremonial purification.

(3) *Appeal to John the Baptist.* John's disciples make him referee in the case. The irritating fact is that He whom John baptized is outdoing their master. Has greater crowds, though John gave Him His vantage by introducing Him originally. Is not this an invasion of John's rights?

2. The Testimony Delivered (27-36).

John's testimony now differs from that originally given. Heretofore he has simply appealed to his hearers to exercise faith in Christ. Now he protests against the indifference, misunderstanding and hostility of the Jews. His testimony in this instance seems to divide into two parts: (1) About himself, "the friend of the Bridegroom." (2) About Christ, "the Bridegroom." This is not the view of some scholars, however, who think that the speech of John the Baptist closes with verse 30, and that the remainder of the passage is the comment of John the Evangelist. If there were such a separation, one would suppose that John would have indicated it in some way. The language of the latter section may be colored with the tints of the writer's mind. What is not the exact verbiage of John the Baptist is a faithful paraphrase of John the Evangelist.

I. TESTIMONY CONCERNING HIMSELF (27-30).

1. **General Principle of Revelation (27).** A man has only such authority as comes to him from God. I can not increase my prerogatives beyond the divine bestowal. Jesus assumes no position which is not rightfully His by the ordination of God.

2. **Application of This Principle to Himself (28, 29).** He reminds His disciples that He has never claimed any higher place than that of subordination to Christ.

Despite their indignation this must always be kept in mind. His mission was purely provisional. An illustration is employed to define his meaning. He is "the friend of the Bridegroom." In the Old Testament "the Bridegroom" symbolizes the relationship between Jehovah and the chosen people. (Isa. liv, 5; Hos. ii, 19, 20.) In the New Testament it symbolizes the relationship between Christ and His Church. (Eph. v, 32; Rev. xix, 7; xxi, 2, 9. Compare Matt. ix, 15; xxv, 1.) Here "the friend of the Bridegroom" means the confidential intimate friend designated to arrange the espousals and to preside at the feast.

3. **His Mission Closed (30).** The forerunner must decrease, the heralded Messiah must increase. "No one could have invented this admirable saying, a permanent motto of every true servant of Christ." (*Godet.*) With the conclusion of his work the old dispensation came to an end.

II. TESTIMONY CONCERNING CHRIST.

As the words, "I must decrease," have been developed in what precedes, the words, "He must increase," are developed in what follows.

1. **The primacy of Jesus (31).** A favorite theme with the Baptist. He contrasts Jesus with himself. He is of the earth, and his message is given from that point of view; Jesus is from heaven, and speaks by immediate knowledge of eternal things.

2. **The Perfection of His Teaching (32, 33).** He has existed from eternity. He testifies directly. To those who refuse Him He is of no consequence, but to those who receive Him He becomes the concrete evidence that God is true. "No man" and "all men" are hyperbolical. Christ's teachings are absolutely perfect, and those who receive His testimony will find this is so.

3. **The Fullness of His Endowment (34, 35).** Sent of God, He speaks the words of God (34). He has received the Spirit without limit. "In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." (Col. ii, 9.) All things are under His control. His authority is complete.

4. **Consequences of Belief and Unbelief (36).** Faith brings eternal life; unbelief brings wrath. "Eternal life" better than "everlasting life." The wrath of God is more natural to John the Baptist than to John the Evangelist, who never uses the phrase. John the Baptist is the nexus between the old and the new dispensation. Wrath is the complement of love. God could not be a good lover without being a good hater.

Facts Concerning the Baptist not in this Gospel.

His birth and parentage (Luke i, 5-25, 57-80); Certain matter in his preaching (Matt. iii, 1-12; Mark i, 4-8; Luke iii, 1-18); His baptism of Jesus (Matt. iii, 13-17; Mark i, 9-11; Luke iii, 21, 22); His embassy to Christ to inquire if He is the real Messiah (Matt. xi, 2-6; Luke vii, 19-23); His conflict with Herod and Herodias, imprisonment and death (Matt. iv, 12; Mark i, 14; Luke iii, 19, 20; Matt. xiv, 1-12; Mark vi, 14-29); Christ's testimony to the greatness of John (Matt. xi, 7-19; xvii, 12, 13; Mark ix, 11-13; Luke vii, 24-35).

Hymn No. 336.

My gracious Lord, I own Thy right
To every service I can pay,
And call it my supreme delight
To hear Thy dictates and obey.
—*Philip Doddridge.*

Personal Questions:

1. Has self been entirely subordinated to Christ?
2. Can I yield to the supremacy of another with the grace of John the Baptist?

The Motive Heroic.

"He must increase, but I must decrease."
—JOHN iii, 30.

"Show me a man's cradle, and I will show you his destiny," said an eminent clergyman after spending a day at the Tombs Police Court in New York. So large a proportion of the criminality there unveiled had its undoubted origin in unhallowed homes, that he felt himself justified in making this sweeping generalization. There is much reason in it, yet it is too fatalistic by half. It assigns a disproportionate place to those factors which are so greatly overworked in our modern social theory—heredity and environment. It ignores the power of self-determination, which is man's noblest endowment. It is contradicted by numerous biographies. So many persons have risen from obscurity to prominence, from squalor to affluence, from baseness to nobility, that it is unsafe to make the circumstances of birth the prophecy of any career.

Thomas Fuller observed that in the genealogical table of Jesus these facts appear: Rehoboam begat Abija, that is, a bad father had a bad son; Abija begat Asa, that is, a bad father had a good son; Asa begat Jehoshaphat, that is, a good father had a good son; Jehoshaphat begat Jehoram, that is, a good father had a bad son. On this he remarks: "I see, Lord, from hence, that my father's piety can not be entailed—that is bad news for me. But I see also that actual impiety is not always hereditary—that is good news for my son."

There is a less hazardous way of predicting destiny than to look into a cradle. Ascertain a man's dominant motive, after he has put aside the garments of childhood, and has begun to think and act for himself; discover the regulative principle of his conduct, and you will be able to make an almost infallible estimate of his future. John the Baptist had the great fortune to be born in a godly home. Of his father and mother it is written that "they were both righteous before God, walking in all the com-

mandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." Trained in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, summoned by the Spirit to a high task, John the Baptist began life with large advantages. It is not inconceivable, however, that he might have neutralized these by throwing off the holy influences of his home and by refusing the commission of God. Thousands of men have sold their birthright and stifled the voice of duty. Many who were born to the purple have exchanged it for rags. They have defied the obligations of heredity and environment, and wasted their substance in riotous living. John the Baptist yielded to the pressure of a Divine call, availed himself of his rich inheritance, and chose for his controlling purpose in life the exaltation of Christ, and the consequent effacement of self. The dominant principle of his conduct is phrased in the noble words, "He must increase, but I must decrease." This lofty sentiment explains the man's whole career.

The names of two great Englishmen rise in the memory as one reflects upon the close relation between a man's self-appointed purpose and the output of his character. Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield, for fifty years filled a very conspicuous place in the world of letters and politics. He was the recipient of the most distinguished honors in the gift of his countrymen and his sovereign; and these emoluments it may be granted he fairly earned. His motto was, "Forti nihil difficile," and right valiantly did he prove by his own achievements that "nothing is hard for the brave." He inscribed this legend on his banners when he entered the arena of political strife, and embodied it in his performances throughout his eventful life. The flavor of heroism which it contains rouses the blood and quickens the pulses of sensitive youth. Five times Disraeli offered himself unsuccessfully for Parliament, but finally won the prize which his proud spirit coveted. Sneered at in the House of Commons, and laughed to silence in his earliest attempts to address that body, he persisted in

thrusting himself to the fore, until his famous prophecy—"The time is coming when you will hear me"—had ample fulfillment, and he was able to dictate terms to his adversaries. There is a brilliancy and dash in such a career which captivates the imagination and commands applause. But a deeper scrutiny of his life discloses the fact that, while Disraeli was brave, he was also selfish. The end to be served in every project was personal aggrandizement. He was as ambitious as Bonaparte, though in a somewhat different field. He was a diplomat in the less honorable sense of the term. At the beginning of his public career he shifted his policy and altered his political creed as often as he could thereby serve his own interests. He carefully planned and cruelly executed vengeance upon those who had opposed him, and when he died there were many to eulogize him for his greatness, but few to mourn him as a friend.

Just as Disraeli was rising into prominence another great Englishman was taking his departure to the invisible world. He also wrought in literature and dealt with problems of international importance, but in what a different spirit, and for what nobler results! William Carey, brooding over the map of the world, as he pursued his humble work in a cobbler's shop, and pondering the condition of the heathen millions, felt the impulse of a sublime ambition. His motto was, "Attempt great things for God; expect great things from God." Was Disraeli persistent? Carey surpassed him in the assiduity with which he persecuted his task. In the face of ecclesiastical censure, despite the protests of British conservatism and the ridicule of almost the whole people, he pushed on over land and sea until he stood upon the burning shores of India, and began his labors for the intellectual and spiritual enlightenment of her pagan populations. Without money or influence, compelled to earn his daily bread by manual toil, working seven years before he gained a single convert, he never surrendered to depression of spirit. Success finally crowned his unremitting efforts. Preaching, teaching, and translating, he touched Oriental life at every point. He was instru-

mental in putting the Scriptures into forty different vernaculars, and thus rendered the Bible accessible to three hundred millions of human beings in his day. Disraeli affected the literature of one period and of one language. Carey impressed the literature of many peoples and of all subsequent time. Disraeli adjusted temporal questions for England and the Continent. Carey entered into spiritual relations with the whole East and in the interest of the kingdom of God. Disraeli's motto made him an imposing figure in the sight of men. Carey's motto made him a person of distinction in the judgment of God.

Sir Walter Scott said: "There never did, and there never will, exist anything permanently noble and excellent in character which is a stranger to the exercise of resolute self-denial. Teach self-denial, and make its practice pleasurable, and you create for the world a destiny more sublime than ever issued from the brain of the wildest dreamer." The qualities which were developed in John the Baptist by the discipline of self-devotion confirm the wisdom and truth of this utterance. The single purpose, from which no allurements could tempt him, but the execution of which involved immense sacrifice, imparted to him a certain robustness of character impossible of attainment by ease-loving men. He was no lily-fingered prophet, coddled in luxury and schooled in conventional felicities of speech and conduct. Absorbed by one great passion, he had no time nor disposition for politic address, or studied action. He did not indulge in equivocal generalities, but spoke stalwart truth in tones vibrant with emotion. His lance was swift and sharp, and pierced the shield of pride and selfishness with no uncertain aim. What a strange figure he made, with his garment of camel's hair thrown athwart his lean body, and a leathern belt girdling his loins! But what power issued from that rugged frame, nourished by locusts and wild honey, and breathed upon by the Spirit of God! "What went ye out into wilderness to see?" asks Christ. "A reed shaken with the wind? . . . A man clothed in

soft raiment? . . . A prophet? Yea, I say unto you more than a prophet. . . . Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist." To men of his ilk the world owes its deepest debt. Not the men who are swept by the currents of popular feeling, but the men who turn those currents into untried channels; not those who are produced by the spirit of the times, but those who inform the age with a new spirit; not the creatures, but the creators of public sentiment; the shaggy-raimented Elijahs, the burly Luthers, the rough-shod Cromwells, who beneath an uncouth exterior hide a star-like soul.

What courage this man exhibited! His was the bravery which is born only of profound convictions and total self-abnegation. He hurls the truth at the vast assemblies which attend his ministry with such terrific impact that soldiers and tax-gatherers and the populace generally cry out, "What shall we do then?" And to each he has not only the general exhortation, "Bring forth fruits meet for repentance," but also some specific injunction which strikes directly upon the sin peculiar to the class begging for advice. Pharisees and Sadducees alike fall under his reprobation. Though he courts death by his words, he does not hesitate to denounce the shameless Herod to his face, exclaiming, "It is not lawful for thee to have another man's wife." He reminds one of Chrysostom, saying, when Eudoxia the empress threatened him, "Go tell her I fear nothing but sin;" of Basil saying, when Valerius declared he would put him to death, "Let him do so. I shall only get to heaven the sooner;" of the Prince of Conde saying, when the French king commanded him to go to mass or he would suffer banishment or death, "As to the first of these, by the grace of God, I never will. As to the other two, I leave the choice to your majesty."

There is nothing surprising in the popularity of a man who preaches with the blood-earnestness which characterized the discourses of John the Baptist. The multi-

tudes are always eager to hear a prophet who pours forth the truth from flaming lips. But John's attractiveness was extraordinary. Chrysostom thundered his eloquent periods to audiences which crowded the church of St. Sophia to suffocation. Bourdaloue drew such throngs to his preaching that trade was interrupted in the streets of Paris adjacent to the place where he delivered his sermons. Wesley and Whitefield preached to thousands of colliers and servant girls at five o'clock in the morning. Men of unusual parts speak to vast congregations in our time. But John the Baptist seems to have exceeded in popularity the most gifted orators. Proclaiming his message along the lonely tract of the Jordan, he drew his auditors in great masses from the city to the wilderness. They abandoned the marts of trade, the haunts of pleasure, and the fellowships of home to hang eagerly upon his words. Yet he suffered no man to forget that the preacher was but the herald of a greater personage. He claimed for himself no higher distinction than this: "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord." Mark Antony urged in Cæsar's behalf that thrice he had refused a kingly crown. With deeper and more sincere humility John rejected the suggestion that he acknowledge himself a person of consequence, and continued to say, "After me cometh a man who is preferred before me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose." When he had once been assured that Jesus was the expected Messiah, he turned the attention of his own personal followers to the Master, and cried, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world!"

A Russian woman of much intelligence remarked to an American statesman who was visiting the domain of the Czar: "It is said, you know, that Tolstoi is jealous of Christ. It will end in his trying to establish a religion of his own." The characterization may have been unjust, but it illustrates a kind of intellectual and spiritual pride which prevails among certain men of large influence in

society. The real magnitude of John's character, the full measure of his self-abnegation, are shown by the spirit with which he met the complaint of his disciples. "Rabbi, He that was with thee beyond the Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to Him!" Such was the pinched and shriveled conception of John's mission in the minds of his narrow partisans, that they were offended at what they fancied was an usurpation of his rights by a competitor. But with wondrous fidelity their master tells them that his joy is fulfilled, as his function is performed, by bringing the Bride and the Bridegroom together. He is but the friend of the Bridegroom. "He must increase, but I must decrease." It is a voluntary obscuration of self. And he has great joy in the eclipse.

Toward the close of his life Bismarck said to a friend: "I feel tired, but I am not sick. My complaint is uneasiness of life, in which I have no longer any object." The loss of his wife, the engrossment of his sons in their own pursuits, and especially his involuntary retirement from political leadership, conspired to render the life of the "man of blood and iron" aimless and empty. Sir William Napier, remembering the anniversary of the battle of Seville, where he won great honors for his valor, spoke ruefully of the decline which his vital energy had suffered, saying: "Now I am old, feeble, bent, miserable. . . . I can not read with pleasure, still less can I think or judge." To be taken out of the stress of worldly activity, to find one's occupation gone, to see one's self supplanted in a congenial field, and bear the experience with equanimity, is what the fewest men are capable of doing. But John the Baptist, far from feeling any despondency as he passes into obscurity, observes the sun blotting out the morning star at the dawn of day with an exultant spirit, and cries, "He must increase, but I must decrease."

Truly this is the divine way of the Christian. What is his mission? To be good, and therefore to be happy? Nay, to be holy, and therefore self-effacing, that Christ

may be manifest. That was the joy of Paul. "Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death." The summit of Christian excellence is attained by that method only. The consecrated soul cries with Theodore Monod:

"Higher than the highest heaven,
Deeper than the deepest sea,
Lord, Thy love at last hath conquered;
Grant me now my supplication—
None of self, and all of Thee."

Charles Kingsley asked a young preacher who was to occupy his pulpit at Eversley to allow him to read two or three of his sermons in manuscript. When he had finished, he chose one by no means the best written, but containing an honest presentation of Jesus Christ, and said: "Preach that. There is a poor soul who will be in church, whose sins it may touch, and whose sorrows it may heal. God help us all!" The needs of humanity are so acute, and the seriousness of attending to them is so great, and the time for our ministry is so short, that it is not worth while to display our little selves. Let the Christ be magnified. "He must increase, but I must decrease."

X.

INTERVIEW WITH THE SAMARITAN WOMAN; ITS RESULTS.

CHAPTER IV. 1-42.

The Gospel of John may be called the Gospel of the Conversations, for more than any other it reports particular interviews of our Lord with individuals.—*Vose.*

Work in Samaria.

This narrative affords a fine illustration of John's method of putting similar events with different characteristics over against one another in sharp contrast. In the preceding chapter we have the interview with Nicodemus, which bears some similarity to the interview recorded in this chapter, and yet which is strikingly different in certain respects. There is the same seizure of the immediate circumstances to form a basis of teaching—the wind in one instance, the water in the other, providing a parable through which the profounder truth can be suggested. But there is a vast difference between the characters of the chief persons in these two interviews and the conditions under which the conversations occur. The woman, a Samaritan, a sinner, is placed in contrast with the rabbi, a ruler of the Jews, a Pharisee.

The characteristics of Jesus as a conversationalist are well brought out in this narrative. It was a genuine conversation and not a monologue. In His public addresses Jesus gave ample opportunity for questions and answers. He was often interrupted by inquiries. Occasionally these betrayed an insolent spirit on the part of the interlocutors, but Jesus never showed irritation. Sometimes in the smaller circles He appeared to be tak-

ing the inferior place, but it will be noted that in such instances He really guided the conversation without seeming to do so. He was a good listener, which is the first mark of a good conversationalist, and He heard with such intelligence that His responses, as sometimes plainly asserted, were addressed to the secret thoughts of men rather than to their spoken words. This narrative naturally divides into three sections, as follows: 1. The conversation with the Samaritan woman (1-26). 2. The conversation with the puzzled disciples (27-38). 3. The confession of the Samaritans (39-42).

I. JESUS AND THE SAMARITAN WOMAN (1-26).

1. **Introduction (1-4).** First phase of Christ's public ministry ended. The results are, unbelief on the part of many, belief on the part of a few, public interest created, a general feeling of uneasiness in the hearts of the authorities. The Pharisees, having heard of His work, were more alarmed by it than by the ministry of John the Baptist. They could understand John better, for he took his position on the law, performed no miracles, and disclaimed being the Messiah. Jesus, on the other hand, claimed Messianic authority, and had little regard for tradition. His work, while only partially successful, was at least too well known to be disregarded. To avoid a premature clash with the jealous guardians of the old religion Jesus transferred His ministry to that portion of the country where the Sanhedrin exercised a less severe authority, and where the number of Gentile residents created a more liberal sentiment. The quickest way to Galilee was through Samaria. The most prejudiced Jews went around Samaria through Perea, thus crossing the Jordan twice. There was no occasion for Jesus to do this, for He did not share the bigotry of His people. On the way to Galilee He meets this Samaritan woman. Did not go through Samaria for the purpose of meeting this woman, but having met her used His opportunity most wonderfully.

2. **Conversation with the Woman (5-26).** Jesus, wearied and thirsty, sitting on the edge of the well at noonday, like any worn traveler, is a picture in harmony with John's habit of presenting the idea of Christ's complete humanity whenever opportunity arises. Compare "I thirst" (xix, 28). When Jesus asks an approaching Samaritan woman for a drink she is astonished in two particulars: first, that He should ask a woman; and second, that He should ask a Samaritan. As a woman she was lightly regarded by the leaders of sentiment. Moreover, she was poor and of unsavory reputation. Above all, she was a Samaritan. Thus prejudice against sex, nation, and character were all broken down by Christ's first ministry outside the bounds of His own territory. In her response to His request the woman rallies Jesus for His unconventional friendliness to a Samaritan woman. She thought He must be in sore distress if He could humiliate Himself enough to ask a drink of her. Study the origin and characteristics of the hostility between the Jews and Samaritans, which endures down to the present time.

Jesus now turns the woman's challenge against her, and says, "If you knew," etc. (10). What did Christ mean by living water? The surprise of the woman, who still fancies that Jesus refers to natural water. Is He greater than Jacob? Where is the well? With what will He draw water? Jesus proclaims the superiority of the water He will give in several particulars: It is a springing fountain, it is within the soul, it is eternal, it is satisfying (14). The unsatisfied sinner, perceiving that Jesus speaks of something she does not have, asks Him for help. But He probes a little deeper for her conscience, and in the words, "Go, call thy husband!" uncovers the woman's life to her own startled gaze (17, 18). Convinced that He is a prophet, she questions Him about worship (19, 20). Jesus then shifts her whole point of view (20-24), showing her that worship must be spiritual, and not merely ceremonial, and

that some day Jews and Samaritans alike will realize this. The woman acknowledges that when the Messiah has come everything will be made plain, and Jesus at once announces that He is the expected One (25, 26).

3. **Jesus as a Teacher.** In all this conversation Jesus exhibits His wonderful teaching qualities, and presents a pattern for all who attempt to inculcate truth in other minds. Observe (1) He deals as thoroughly with one person as with many, and discloses as important truth to a single listener as to a large congregation; (2) His teaching is distinctly personal. Everything turns upon the needs of this particular soul; (3) His approach is very adroit. He throws Himself upon the sympathy of the woman and gains her interest at once; (4) He proceeds from the consideration of a common physical necessity to a spiritual requirement; (5) He drives the woman back upon her conscience at a critical moment in the conversation; (6) He moves up to a sublime spiritual idea just when the woman is most sensitive, when her mind is alert, and she is quivering with the discovery of His profound spiritual insight; (7) When the woman is thus prepared for it, He reveals His own Messianic identity; He is the Christ. It is a wonderful piece of strategy in soul-winning.

4. **Observations.** How could John record this conversation unless actually present when it occurred? Did he remain with Jesus during this interview, though the other disciples had withdrawn? Notice that the difficulties in the way of approach to this woman were no hindrance to Jesus. We shall not meet any natural or artificial barriers so hard to surmount in preaching religion to our companions as Jesus found in the hostility between Jews and Samaritans. Observe that, having been convinced of the real significance of Christ and His teachings, the Samaritan woman ran away to call others to Him, including perhaps that man who was not her husband (28, 29).

II. JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES (27-38).

1. **Their Silent Astonishment (27).** The ancient prejudice against teaching a woman. The silence of the disciples is both a tribute to their loyalty to the Master, and also an evidence of the impression which His character had made upon them.

2. **Their Lesson on Food (31-34).** Putting aside their curiosity, they proffer food with loving anxiety. In His joy Jesus does not feel the necessity of material sustenance. His resources of strength they do not understand. Their exclamation of surprise and question not evidence of unusual dullness. Other instances of like amazement occur often. "What wonder that the woman did not understand the water? The disciples did not understand the food!" (*Augustine.*)

3. **Their Lesson of the Harvest (35-38).** He sees the harvest in the mere promise of the first blades. Sowing and reaping come together with Him. It is often so with other religious teachers. But often the reapers gather what others have sown, and the sower does not reap at all. Yet all will rejoice together in the end.

III. JESUS AND THE SAMARITANS (39-42).

The discourse with the disciples has occurred while the woman has been away in the city, calling the people. She has left her waterpot, forgetting her own material needs, and has been stirring up the citizens for their spiritual benefit. What an evangelist she was! (*a*) She brought the crowd into the presence of Jesus. (*b*) She inspired belief in their hearts by the mere recital of her experience. (*c*) When she had conducted them to Jesus, they were eager to investigate further, and persuaded Him to remain with them for awhile. (*d*) In two days the number of believers greatly increased, and the ground of faith was shifted from her testimony to their own convictions. Observe how these Samaritans

grasped the idea of Christ's mission to save the world. It is often so among the heathen of to-day. The Samaritans evidently did not require the "signs" for which the Jews were always clamoring.

Hymn No. 398.

It may not be our lot to wield
The sickle in the ripened field;
Nor ours to hear, on summer eves,
The reaper's song among the sheaves.
—*Whittier.*

Personal Questions:

1. Do I see a whitened field wherever I look?
2. Have I learned Christ's secret support for every task?

Undeveloped Possibilities.

"Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? Behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest."—JOHN iv, 35.

A man possessed of an intemperate optimism said not long since that the evangelization of the world was proceeding so rapidly, and converted heathen were showing themselves so ready to support their own churches, and to extend their work into adjacent regions, that Christians who desired to have any part in the missionary movement would need to contribute quickly, as the opportunity would vanish forever at an early date. His motive was excellent, but his intelligence was limited. With a comparatively small proportion of the world's population nominally Christian, with many millions more of heathen on the earth to-day than existed when the missionary enterprise took practical shape something over a century ago, there would seem to be left a problem of

no mean dimensions for the Church of to-morrow. This fact alone indicates a whitening harvest awaiting the toil and patience of consecrated laborers; for the world is everywhere accessible to the invading hosts of Christianity, and opportunity is big with promise.

But the signs of an evangelistic crisis may be discerned at closer range. When William Booth many years ago directed the attention of the Church to "the submerged tenth" of England's population, or the more than three millions of destitute and unreached creatures, who were devoid of privileges in the house of God, outcasts and beggars on the face of the earth, he presented startling evidence of a field crying for harvesters. Conditions almost as portentous, though somewhat dissimilar, exist to-day in America, where the drift of the population to the cities is fast swelling into a torrent, which apparently becomes increasingly perilous as its current is enlarged and hastened by foreign immigration. If all the people of the great cities desired to attend divine worship, the churches are too small to accommodate more than a fraction of them; but unfortunately thousands of them have no wish to enter a sanctuary. The audiences in these great centers are largely, if not entirely, composed of the prosperous and the respectable, while the poor and the needy are far from the gates of praise. Thousands of workingmen—using that term of the artisan class—are utterly alienated from the Church. Scarcely more than twenty-five per cent of the young men of the nation, between the ages of eighteen and thirty, are ever found within a place of worship; only fifteen per cent are regular in their attendance at Church; and only five per cent are actually enrolled in the membership of the Church. But young men between these ages constitute two-thirds of the criminal classes of the country, with crime showing a decided tendency to increase in many parts of the land. Misconception of the attitude of the Church toward the depressed elements in the population inspires many of those who most need its ministries with hostility to its very name. Meanwhile

sin continues to drag them down to ever deepening pits of social and moral degradation.

In Edward Bellamy's "Looking Backward," not all the doctrines of which can receive the unqualified endorsement of the wise, but some of the prophecies of which seem in a fair way to be fulfilled, the author represents himself as coming from an inspection of the misery engendered by the struggle for a livelihood in the squalid section of a great city, to a fashionable dinner party, where he is good-naturedly censured for his dullness. And when he is asked where he has been to make him so unconvivial, he replies, somewhat fiercely, "I have been to Golgotha; I have seen humanity hanging on a cross!" In too many instances the instrument of suffering endured by such persons was constructed by their own sinfulness, but in some cases they are doubtless the victims of the greed and cruelty of others. The evils of intemperance, of industrial tyranny, of commercial crookedness, of political corruption, which fester in our great cities, and which complicate the miseries of the people, provide a problem of enormous magnitude for our Christian leaders to solve. Society can only be regenerated by the salvation of its individual members, and Christ is calling for laborers in larger numbers than hitherto have answered His summons.

"What a beautiful field!" exclaimed Chalmers, as he looked upon the degraded purlieus of Edinburgh, and with the passion of his Lord he threw himself into the task of cleansing that portion of the city from its reeking vileness. Such a spirit will glorify any field of opportunity, and fill the soul with unquenchable ardor.

Apart from these acute manifestations of iniquity, there are indications enough of the requirement for enlarged evangelistic effort in the ordinary conditions of current life. Michelet said: "The great achievements of the Renaissance were the discovery of the world and the discovery of man." Thanks to the explorers, the scientists, the investigators of the universe, the world we live

in and the world which are neighbors to our planet have been discovered and chartered in the sea of space. The finding of man's true dignity is a work of still greater proportions. The emancipation of the individual conscience, the liberation of the intellect, the assertion of human rights under any type of social development—these are truly magnificent attainments of the modern era. But the pendulum may swing too far. Even now there are symptoms of an undue glorification of human excellence. We must not forget Pascal's pathetic words: "O, the grandeur and the littleness, the excellency and the corruption, the majesty and the meanness of man!" The prevalent sentiment apparently regards the man of the twentieth century civilization as showing no defects which education can not remove, thus making the doctrine of regeneration in order to salvation quite obsolete. This position is contrary to the observed facts of human life, and is contradicted by the universal moral consciousness. "Don't talk to me of the natural goodness of man," said Frederick the Great, "I know the animal too well myself." Luther said, "I am more afraid of my own heart than I am of the Pope and all his councils." The words of Jeremiah are sharp, but they are warranted by the modern products of the unregenerate spirit. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." The most obvious need of human life is purification at the center.

We are building the finest cities since the dawn of history. Art is more rational and diversified than at any previous period. Music has more votaries than at any time since the morning stars sang together. Intelligence is more widely diffused than ever. Civilization is more humane, charity is more extensive, public reforms are more acceptable, and private manners are more kindly than society has ever known hitherto. Nevertheless we live in a lost world, or the mission of Christ was unnecessary, and His sacrifice a foolish waste of life. But we know that each generation springs into action tainted with the same sinful propensities; and society can never be redeemed from its failure and sorrows until it accepts

the ministrations of Christ as the sovereign remedy for its ills. Regeneration is the supreme necessity of the world, and we need not turn from our own doorstep to discover that this is so.

"Give me a hundred men," said John Wesley, "who fear nothing but sin, and desire nothing but God, and I will shake the world; and I care not a straw whether they be clergymen or laymen, and such alone will overthrow the kingdom of Satan and build up the kingdom of God on earth." He obtained his complement, and they justified his prediction. The demand for all times is a like consecration of individuals to the sublime task of saving society. The world requires to be shaken in every generation. It is a mark of humanity's moral default that the race is always in peril of lapsing back into spiritual poverty. Withdraw the offices of religion for a decade, and civilization would reel toward barbarism. This hour, as always, Christ is saying, "Go, work to-day in My vineyard!"

The inadequacy of workers for the work is the painful element in the current situation. "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few. Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest that He will send forth laborers into his harvest." The only calling in the world, in which the supply does not exceed the demand, is that of Christian service. One of the troubles of our times is that religion is a mere department in men's lives. It has a pigeon-hole in the merchant's desk, a box in the capitalist's safety deposit vault, a day in the calendar, a fraction of an income, a modicum of time, a division of talent and energy. It is not the supreme, controlling interest of life. What to eat and drink, and wherewithal to be clothed, the quest of the temporal, absorbs the attention of thousands. Business is more important than worship, politics awakens greater enthusiasm than evangelism, the pleasures of the world are sweeter than the delights of God's house. The majority of Christians are receivers, and not transmitters. They have an im-

mense capacity for sermons and addresses, but little purpose to transmute pious sentiments into practical effort in behalf of the lost. A child who saw a deaf man sitting on the pulpit stairs with a large ear-trumpet against his head, asked, "Is that an archangel?" Too many Christians who ought to be proclaiming the message of salvation are content with merely listening to its charming accents.

The ancient Batavians, Motley tells us, wore a ring of iron about their necks until they had slain an enemy in battle. After this achievement it was broken off, being considered an emblem of sloth. The Christian who has not won a soul for his Lord is burdened with a badge of humiliation, which can not be removed until he has at least made an honest effort to lead a sinner to the Cross.

A young American girl was in Berlin some years ago when the Emperor's birthday was being celebrated. It was her good fortune to be taken through the palace during the absence of the Kaiser, and to be shown the gifts which were on exhibition. What chiefly interested her was the manner in which a poor woman's humble present was received. She came with a few little strawberries, which she had evidently raised in her own garden. These were so small in quantity that her basket had first been nearly filled with eggs, and then the berries had been arranged to the best advantage on the top. The attendant who received them said most courteously, "The Emperor will be very grateful for your gift," and the woman went away in a transport of happiness, for she had brought her best to the beloved sovereign. The English historian Green, describing a period of persecution for religious opinions, says that "the commonest lives gleamed into poetry at the stake." Christian service transfigures the persons of those who render it, for sacrifice is involved in consecration, and sacrifice is divine. The Christian who hesitates to work for the rescue of the perishing because he is conscious

that his talents are meager has never learned that bringing one's best to Christ, however humble it may be, is the measure of one's fidelity and the prophecy of an exceeding great reward. The aggregate of unused talent in the world is very greatly in excess of the whole sum which is applied in a practical way to the help of the world. The aim of the Church is to realize the ideal expressed in the prayer of Moses. "Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put His spirit upon them!" If the power which is lost to the Church through the diffidence of the humble and the neglect of the talented could be reclaimed, the world would soon be brought to Christ.

Whenever Dr. Johnson looked upon the face of his watch he saw there in Greek characters the impressive words, "The night cometh." Jesus felt the instigation of the fact thus announced. "I must work the works of Him that sent Me while it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work." The time is short, the need is great, the laborers are few, the obligation is insistent.

Jesus was inspired by a vision of the world redeemed from sin. It sustained Him in hours of depression, when His enemies misconstrued His motives and His disciples misunderstood His words, when He was hungry and weary and felt the world's contempt. It comforted Him when Judas betrayed Him, when the agony of Gethsemane was upon Him, when the mobs buffeted Him, and when the authorities bartered His blood. It thrilled Him on Calvary, and made His death-throes a mighty rapture. He looked away across the stormy centuries through the clouds of war and the mists of doubt, and saw the world recovered from the fell dominion of iniquity, and He cried like a victor from the field of valor, "It is finished!" The coming of the Samaritans to listen to His words by the well near Sychar gave Him a foregleam of the ultimate triumph of His mission. The acceptance of His self-revelation by the sinful woman with whom He conversed at noonday presaged for Him

the final conquest of the world to truth. Weariness and hunger were forgotten in the joy of a divine achievement. "I have meat to eat that ye know not of. My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work."

Into the vision of Jesus Christ every disciple may enter who will co-operate in the execution of His mission. To realize that one is sharing the labors of Christ, and shall some day participate in His triumph and experience His glory, is enough to make one shout in the very streets for excess of joy.

At daybreak on the summit of Snowdon some quarrymen asked Newman Hall to preach to them. He replied that God was preaching to them through the wonders of nature around them, and that it was better for them to listen to His voice. He simply offered prayer. Two years later a man who had been present informed him that fifty people were converted as the outcome of that season of worship. Newman Hall replied that he had only offered prayer. "Yes," was the answer, "and as they only spoke Welsh they did not understand a word you said, but the result was a revival in the village church near at hand." Lives that are hid with Christ in God, that are actuated by the spirit of a complete consecration to duty, will find a whitening harvest everywhere, and will experience the ecstasy which is born of success in places where even devout faith has not anticipated it.

XI.

HEALING OF THE NOBLEMAN'S SON.

CHAPTER IV. 43-54.

Saint John expresses the Divine voice with absolute authority of spiritual life and death in the present and in the future.—*Ramsay.*

Work in Galilee.

JOHN gives in this incident the final illustration in a series of narratives descriptive of the work of Jesus in the several provinces of Palestine, to wit: In Jerusalem, the capital (Chap. II), in Judæa, outside the capital (Chap. III), in Samaria (Chap. IV), and in Galilee (Chap. IV). This appears to be the plan he had in mind, and not a mere accident. At the same time he has followed another scheme, which illustrates the different kinds of work Jesus performed, viz.: first, the miracle, or "sign;" second, an assertion of Messianic office in the cleansing of the temple; third, two interviews with individuals; fourth, an address to His disciples; fifth, calling out testimony from strangers. The chronological order has been interrupted to the extent of omitting certain matter which the writer did not think necessary for his purpose.

I. THE GENERAL SITUATION IN GALILEE (43-45).

After two days of teaching in Samaria Jesus passes on to Galilee. John accompanies his announcement of this fact with a quotation from the lips of Jesus which seems at first to be inappropriate (43). "His own country" would appear to be Galilee, when we remember that Jesus was brought up at Nazareth and that He spent

much of His time at Capernaum. What He assigns as a reason for going into Galilee would, therefore, seem to be a good reason for staying away from Galilee. This presents a difficulty of interpretation, and has led to the following among other theories: (1) The supposition that He went into Galilee because He wanted retirement and rest, and would be undisturbed in a part of the country where He was not highly esteemed. This idea is supported apparently by the statement in the early verses of Chap. IV, where it is declared that on account of the contentions of the Pharisees He resolved to leave Judæa and go into Galilee, where He would not be subjected to such embarrassments. The other evangelists record a similar saying about the prophet without honor in his own country with reference to Nazareth (Matt. xiii, 57; Mark vi, 4; Luke iv, 24). (2) Others have explained that Jesus could not begin His public ministry in Galilee because "a prophet hath no honor," etc. So He began in Judæa, and having made a reputation outside "His own country," He came back to it with a certain vogue. John iv, 45, seems to contain this idea. (3) Still others have said that Christ's own country is Judæa, where He was born, and which was the home of the prophets. Here indeed He met little favor. He had been compelled to withdraw from it. When, however, He came into Galilee He was received with open arms. The truth of the saying, apart from all considerations of its precise interpretation in this connection, is amply justified by common observation. Impressed by what they had witnessed of the works and words of Jesus at the feast in Jerusalem, the Galileans gave Him a very cordial welcome. The hour had apparently arrived for Jesus to accomplish a more positive work.

II. THE MIRACLE AND ITS RESULTS (46-54).

1. **The Occasion (46, 47).** Back to Cana where the first "sign" had been given. Another work in the domestic circle. This time not a physical embarrassment or a social need, but a matter of life. Some

attribute His return to Cana to the probability that His family had settled there. He found the soil prepared. His coming created a great sensation. The news spread rapidly. "A certain nobleman." The term does not refer to birth. He was an official of Herod Antipas, who, though only a tetrarch, held his father's title of king. Whether this man held a civil or military position is unknown. His child was lying at the point of death. His anxiety impels him to come, not send, twenty miles from Capernaum. Desires eagerly to bring Jesus to the bedside of his child.

2. **The Nobleman's Faith Tested (48).** Jesus appears almost cold and indifferent. He deprecates the disposition of the Galileans to seek "signs and wonders" as a basis for faith. Here, as elsewhere, He insists that such faith is not of the highest quality.

3. **The Nobleman's Paternal Anxiety (49).** "My little child." The man's solicitude is pathetic. Having come twenty miles he will not be put off. Jesus shows no eagerness to secure an official as such for an adherent, but He is touched by the man's earnestness and suffering. He also realizes that while the man is thus engrossed, no higher truth than pertains to his present anxiety can be introduced into his mind. He will therefore attend to his plea, while at the same time moving the man's heart to deeper things.

4. **The Nobleman's Faith Enlarged (50).** Jesus gives more than the man asks. The father believes that Christ can come and heal his son, but it did not occur to him that He could heal the child without coming. Compare the case of the centurion (Matt. viii, 8). The nobleman believed that Christ could heal a sick child, but he did not dream that Christ could raise a dead child. What an enlarged vision of Christ's power broke upon the man's mind at the words of Jesus, "Thy son liveth." Thus a feeble faith is nursed, disciplined, proved, enlarged.

5. **The Sign Confirmed (51-53).** The man returned somewhat leisurely. Did not meet his servants coming to tell him the good news until the next day. Reasons given for this are various, as follows: (1) His faith is so confident that he does not need to hurry. (2) Had some business affairs as an official which required his personal attention. (3) Differences in the computation of time may account for apparent delay. In any case the child had rallied at the exact time Jesus had spoken the words, as they found by comparing notes. The true character of a miracle is shown herein. It was predicted, or announced, and occurred at the time and under the circumstances specified. It was referable to a personal agent.

6. **Impression on the Nobleman (53).** "Himself believed and all his house." He believed now not merely in the word of Jesus, but in His true personal character. "The miracle was a double one: on the body of the absent child, on the heart of the present father; one was cured of his sickness, the other of his unbelief." (*Trench.*)

Hymn No. 672.

Shepherd of tender youth,
Guiding in love and truth
Through devious ways;
Christ our triumphant King,
We come Thy name to sing,
Hither our children bring
To shout Thy praise.
—*Clement of Alexandria.*

Personal Questions:

1. Are we, like the Capernaum official, anxious to bring Christ and our children together?

2. Are we anxious enough to go ourselves to get Him, or do we content ourselves with merely sending?

The Climax of Faith.

"Himself believed, and his whole house."
—JOHN iv, 53.

John had a fine sense for dramatic movement. If he had been inventing a story he would never have missed an opportunity for cumulative effect. When he relates an incident in the life of Christ he arranges his items in a progressive order. He would say that this resulted inevitably from simply recording the Master's method of dealing with individuals. Illustrations of Christ's art of leading a soul on from the beginnings of belief to the confession of a profound faith are found in the interview with the Samaritan woman, the healing of the man who was blind from birth, and the conversation with Martha at the grave of Lazarus. The same skillful method is employed in developing the faith of the nobleman whose child was recovered from illness by the word of Jesus. At the end of the story the father is shown to have attained a summit of faith of which he did not dream at the commencement.

A young Jewish lad named David Mendel, who used to astonish a book-seller in Hamburg by losing himself for hours in volumes so learned that no one else would touch them, was attracted to certain works on Christianity, and read them with growing interest. He was impressed with the claims which Jesus makes upon humanity, and finally became convinced that He who taught such ethics, and required of His adherents such a life, must be more than a man. For a long time he wavered between fidelity to the teachings of his parents and loyalty to the new conceptions which had entered his soul. At length he could hold his false position no longer, and publicly renounced Judaism and was baptized. To commemorate the change which had occurred in his life he adopted the name Neander, signifying *new man.* Such, by a slow but steady process from the first awakening of his mind to the final surrender of his will, was the conversion of the man who has been called the father

of modern Church history. In like manner the rudimentary faith of the nobleman of Capernaum grew into mature strength under the cultivating skill of Jesus.

Trouble was the inciting cause which led the nobleman to seek the help of Christ. He must have had a little faith in the power of the person who had created such an impression by his works, or he would not have come to Cana. But if he had not been in distress he probably would not have approached Jesus. There was at least a willingness to believe, born of his deep anxiety. Adversity drives many a soul to Christ. Sickness in the household, financial embarrassment, the death of loved ones, a dire misfortune, will often send men to their knees who have not been accustomed to pray, provided there is a glimmer of faith in their hearts. Victor Hugo says: "The pupil is dilated at night, and eventually finds daylight in it, in the same way as the soul is dilated in misfortune, and eventually finds God in it." Lincoln declared that he had little interest in personal religion until the loss of a child turned his attention to the consolations secured by communion with God. "I was an upright man in my outward life before he died," said a father, pointing to a portrait of his son which hung on the wall, "but when he left me I became a Christian." In the hour of utter defeat many a man who has neglected God flees to Him for succor. What a strange inconsistency! What right has he to pray in adversity who has been mute in prosperity? The blessed right of one in trouble to appeal to Him who said, "Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." By responding to that invitation when life is most unpromising, many persons of little faith ultimately find God.

Daniel Webster during his last illness called for the reading of the ninth chapter of Mark, in which occurs the story of the father who brought his demoniac child

to Jesus, and said, "If Thou canst do anything, have compassion on us and help us." When Jesus had assured the man that all things were possible to him who believes, the agonized father cried out in tears, "Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief." After this passage had been read, Mr. Webster asked for the tenth chapter of John, which concludes with the words, "And many believed on Him there." Then he dictated the following inscription for his monument, and after revising it affixed his signature: "Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief. Philosophical argument, especially that drawn from the vastness of the universe, in comparison with the apparent insignificance of this globe, has sometimes shaken my reason for the faith that is in me; but my heart has assured and reassured me that the Gospel of Jesus Christ must be a reality."

On a certain occasion when Jesus had been giving His disciples some teaching which was particularly difficult for them to receive, they exclaimed, "Lord, increase our faith!" Such a prayer is sure to be answered, and doubtless Mr. Webster found it so, for he passed away in the full confidence that Christ had redeemed him, saying fervently: "Now, unto God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost be praise forever and forever! Amen." The nobleman in our story probably was not spiritually intelligent enough to offer a petition for increased faith, but his heart did inspire him with an intense yearning for the assistance which he believed he could obtain of Christ, who never misses an opportunity to draw faith on to a deeper expression. In this instance Jesus seeks to provoke belief of a higher quality by a policy of hesitation. He chides the man for wanting wonders wrought to induce faith, but when the father ignores the criticism and in a passion of grief cries out, "Sir, come down ere my child die!" Jesus grants his request, though not exactly in the way he had asked. For, instead of going with him to Capernaum, Jesus surpasses what the man had supposed possible, and pronounces the child healed at that moment, saying, "Go thy way; thy son liveth."

Thus Christ nourishes a feeble faith into strength.

His very hesitation is but to test the sincerity of the supplicant, to draw his desire for help out to an intense longing, to impel him to cast himself utterly upon the Lord, and thus finally to enable him to apprehend the meaning of belief unto eternal life. Many acceptable prayers doubtless remain unanswered for a season, not because the Lord does not hear, nor because He is not willing, but because He would discipline the soul, and tutor it into a nobler trust.

The nobleman's faith now assumes such proportions that he trusts the word of Jesus completely. He betrays not the least incredulity. With no indication of anxiety, he makes his journey homeward, to find on conference with his servants, who meet him on the way, that his child began to amend at the precise time when Jesus said, "Thy son liveth." Here is confirmatory evidence that Jesus actually wrought the miracle He announced, and which the nobleman believed was performed before he possessed the proof. That is genuine faith, and it has the quality which believers must now show, if they are to receive the benefits of fellowship with Christ. Mr. Huxley admitted that "It is not upon any *a priori* considerations that objections either to the supposed efficacy of prayer or to the supposed occurrences of miracles can be based." He thought, as do other doubters of the miraculous, that the evidence for such supernatural events is not adequate. But the argument that an occurrence is altogether improbable if it contradicts the general experience of mankind is not to be relied upon with perfect confidence. Said Lyman Abbott: "If the Old Testament told the story of a naval engagement between the Jewish people and a pagan people, in which all the ships of the pagan people were destroyed, and yet not a single man was killed among the Jews, all the skeptics would have scorned the narrative. Every one *now* believes it, except those who live in Spain."

Is Christ divine? Then He can do anything which is right, and is sufficiently wise to know when the object

sought is important enough to justify the miraculous exercise of power. The healing of this child without the interposition of Christ's bodily touch, or even His personal attendance at the sick bed, is no more incredible to those who believe in Christ's true character than the wonders of wireless telegraphy would be to those who have never learned its secrets or witnessed its remarkable performances; while the marvels of thought-transference and other psychic phenomena, which modern investigators of occult science have brought to light, indicate how foolish and unreasonable is the usual protest against the miracles of Jesus. In any case the Christian believes his Lord is superior to any difficulties which confront ordinary persons, for He is the Son of God.

Into fellowship with Him let the children and youth of our households be brought at the earliest opportunity. Parental anxiety for the health, the education, and the worldly success of the young is ordinarily strong enough. But eagerness for their spiritual well-being is frequently lacking. Even those who are entrusted with the religious instruction of children are sometimes unmindful of their highest obligations. Parents and ministers and teachers in the Sunday-school do not always realize the solemnity of their positions.

When the Greeley Relief Expedition had reached the frozen regions of the North, and the few survivors of the Arctic perils were being removed, the boats in which they were to be conveyed to the ship were nearly swamped by the carelessness of a sailor. The officer in command cried out: "Steady! Steady! It were better for us not to have found these sufferers, if we are now to be so careless as to lose them." It would have been better that we had never been given the privilege of addressing ourselves to the care of the young, if we are now to miss the opportunity of bringing them within the saving grace of Jesus Christ.

The climax of the nobleman's faith was attained when he attached himself to Jesus Christ in personal fellowship. As a consequence of the steady development of

his confidence in the Master, "himself believed, and his whole house." That would be a strange expression to use at this point, if it did not mean more than had already been said. The man believed to a certain degree when he first came to Jesus. He believed with a fuller confidence when Jesus said, "Thy son liveth." He believed with a still deeper trust when his servants confirmed his expectations. But when he saw with his own eyes the indisputable evidence of his child's recovery he believed in the real mission of Jesus, and hailed Him as the Messiah. Henceforth he would be a loyal disciple, for he was a changed man.

No miracle would be of any permanent value to us if it did not thus bring us into loving attachment to Christ as Lord and Savior. Faith-cures which have no spiritual effects must be forever under suspicion. That miracle is most impressive which most obviously transforms the character of him in whose behalf it is performed.

A tall and powerful Scotchman working in a steel mill was, like many of his fellows, addicted to the excessive use of strong drink. But one day it was announced that he had turned "religious." And when he was pressed to drink he said, "I shall never take a drink mair, lads. Na drunkard can inhabit the kingdom of God." A knowing one smiled incredulously, and said, "Wait a bit, wait a bit. Wait until the hot weather of July. When he gets as dry as a gravel pit, then he will give in. He can't help it." But straight through the hottest months he toiled on without a single failure. Finally the superintendent said to him one day: "You used to take considerable liquor. Don't you miss it?" "Yes," said he emphatically. "How do you manage to keep away from it?" he was asked. "Weel, just this way," he replied. "It is now ten o'clock, is n't it? Weel, to-day is the twentieth of the month. From seven till eight I asked the Lord to halp me. He did so, and I put a dot down on the calendar right near the twenty. From eight till nine He kep' me, and I put down anither dot. From nine to ten He 's kep' me, and noo I gie Him the glory

as I put down the third dot. Just as I mark these I pray, 'O Lord, halp me; halp me to fight it off for anither hour.'" If a man has never experienced a transforming power akin to this, even though it be not in such a desperate situation, then he does not realize the kind of miracles Jesus is capable of performing, nor has he demonstrated for himself the supreme efficacy of faith in the Son of God.

SECTION III.

PERIOD OF CONFLICT.

CHAPTERS V-XI.

In this section of John's Gospel we have five miracles or "signs" and a variety of very important discourses, suggested mainly by the hostility of the Jewish rulers toward Christ, which from this point begins to show itself openly, and which culminates after the raising of Lazarus in an avowed determination to destroy the Master. The divisions in John's work need to be kept in mind if the purpose of the writer is to be fully understood. This is made the more necessary by the differences which exist between his Gospel and the narratives of the other evangelists. Section III falls into the following divisions:

1. The Healing at the Pool of Bethesda.
2. Discourse on Life: A Defense.
3. Signs at the Sea of Galilee.
4. Discourse on the Bread of Life.
5. Jesus at the Feast of Tabernacles.
6. Jesus and the Fallen Woman.
7. The Witness of Jesus Concerning Himself.
8. The Healing of the Man Born Blind.
9. The Allegory of the Good Shepherd.
10. Discourse at the Feast of Dedication.
11. The Raising of Lazarus.

XII.

HEALING OF THE IMPOTENT MAN AT BETHESDA.

CHAPTER V. 1-16.

The Fourth Gospel is the heart of Christ.—*Ernesti.*

Introduction (1-4).

Uncertain what feast is meant. Opinions divided between Pentecost, Purim, Passover, Tabernacles. Most modern scholars think Purim. Study characteristics of this feast.

Impossible to identify the pool of Bethesda with certainty. Several plausible conjectures have been made. Intermittent springs now found in the locality show how favorable the soil is to such a phenomenon. Bethesda may mean "House of Mercy," or "House of Outpouring," or "House of the Portico." The pool was surrounded by colonnades, porticoes, or cloisters, in which the sick could be sheltered. The place was a kind of infirmary to which Jesus came perhaps to heal this very patient.

The reputation of the place was established, for a multitude of expectant sick folk were waiting for the boiling of the waters, which were probably mineral, and most efficacious when in motion. The reference to the coming of the angel to disturb the pool is simply a phrasing of the popular belief, and is regarded as an interpolation by the best scholars. Observe that supernatural qualities are ascribed to phenomena which are not understood. Science clears away such superstitions, but science does not account for the miracles of Jesus. There was no instantaneous cure worked by this thermal spring.

The patients who sought it probably had no such expectation. They believed that by repeated baths they would finally be healed.

I. THE SIGN (5-9).

1. **The Man's Hapless State.** Has been thirty-eight years suffering his malady. Figures given to show how desperate is his case. Some think this an illustration of the period of thirty-eight years which Israel endured as a punishment wandering in the wilderness. The man a type of the Jewish people paralyzed by faithlessness at the time of Christ's coming. Jesus with His deep discernment quickly discovers the worst case in the crowd. Perhaps He knows his situation from popular account, perhaps by supernatural intelligence. The miracles reported by John are all wrought spontaneously, as though they were impelled by Christ's profound sympathy with humanity, except the healing of the nobleman's son in Chap. IV.

2. **The Great Physician's Challenge.** "Do you wish to get well? have you a will to that end?" The interrogation is justified. There are invalids who do not care to be healed. They trade on their sickness as professional mendicants, or they take satisfaction in the attentions of their friends. This man's healing depended in large part upon his will to have it. In the physical realm the will plays a very considerable part, as all medical men will testify. In the spiritual realm it is the determining factor, and is called faith. If either a sick man or a sinner acquiesces in his condition there is no hope for him.

3. **The Helpless Helped (7-9).** Having no man to cast him into the pool, and being incapable of entering himself, the impotent man is shown that he does not require the pool, or any other external remedy. The Master cries, "Rise, take up thy bed and walk." Three things are thus shown to be necessary: 1. Instant obedience to the call, which will be followed by

strength. 2. Immediate trust, which will enable him to abandon all other means of healing. 3. Readiness to use the strength obtained forthwith. The result is an instantaneous cure.

II. THE RESULT OF THE SIGN (10-16).

1. **Hostility of the Jews.** Attack upon the man, which is a veiled assault upon Jesus. They care nothing for the cure. They are only zealous for the suppression of the healer. The Sabbath law is broken in the letter. It is nothing to them that it is kept in the spirit, which they do not understand. Jesus was culpable if judged only by the Rabbinical glosses on the fourth commandment. He was innocent if judged by the law of love. By a rigid and showy keeping of the Sabbatic regulations the Pharisees made a display of outer righteousness. By humane deeds on the Sabbath Jesus gave the law a new and beautiful interpretation, which they could not appreciate.

2. **The Man's Defense (11-13).** To his mind the great person who had power to heal him with a word, had also authority to bid him carry away his bed on the Sabbath day. The Pharisees are eager to see the man who has arrogated to himself such unusual prerogatives. But the healed patient does not know his benefactor, who has quietly slipped away in the crowd.

3. **The Healer Discovered (14, 15).** Jesus supplements the physical healing with spiritual teaching. In the temple, whither the man has gone perhaps, to return thanks, the Master finds him, and bids him sin no more, lest a worse affliction come upon him. In some way the man's suffering has been connected with his sins. Not necessary to think this is always true in specific cases. The personal identity of Jesus is in some way disclosed, and the man goes away to proclaim His name. In this there is no evil intention, but a desire to vindicate both himself and the healer,

who is the already famous teacher and miracle worker from Galilee, whose works and words surely justify His irregularities.

4. **The Increased Emnity (16).** They now move for the first time to destroy Him. They attempt to convict Him of Sabbath-breaking, as He has already convicted them of profaning the temple.

Hymn No. 242.

With pitying eyes the Prince of grace
Beheld our helpless grief:
He saw, and, O amazing love!
He ran to our relief.—*Isaac Watts.*

Personal Questions:

1. Do I honestly desire salvation?
2. Am I ready to give instant response to the Lord?

The Cure of Souls.

Wilt thou be made whole?—JOHN v, 6.

This narrative is no sooner read than some hard-brained man who thinks more of mathematics than dogmatics, who would rather be logical than theological, declares that it is a story more worthy of the Middle Ages than of our times, and wants to know how the Bible can expect to hold the allegiance of intelligent people while it adheres to such preposterous tales, which remind one of the Church of St. Anne de Beaupré or the statues of bleeding saints, or the grotto of Lourdes. He does not know that textual criticism removes certain portions of the narrative which are offensive to reason. Our Revised Version recognizes the fact that a popular misconception of the day about angelic interference in the waters of a thermal spring has been transferred from

the margin of an old manuscript into the body of the text, and has wisely omitted it. And this may be done without impairing the value of the story. On the other hand, it receives added strength.

Those who throw over an entire narrative because some of its details do not appeal to their reason are as unwise as an old Dutch farmer, whose buildings were overrun with rats, and who resorted to the expedient of burning down the structures in order that he might deliver himself from the pests. There are persons to-day calling themselves logical who, because occasionally they discover a minor defect in the Scriptures, repudiate the whole system of Christianity. But after criticism has done its best there remains the fact that Jesus did heal the impotent man. We can not strike out the supernatural from the New Testament. It is here and everywhere. And while the skeptical may question the miraculous element in this healing, on the supposition that the man was possessed of such a disease as only needed for its removal an authoritative voice to make the victim's will assert itself, no such explanation will account for many other recorded miracles. And we have no occasion to make apology for Jesus. He is life, and life essentially. And what we call the miraculous is simply the extraordinary emergence of life, the unusual working of an activity that is constantly in exercise. Huxley admitted that there was no inherent reason to deny the credibility of a miracle; and we who have seen Jesus working spiritual miracles in this twentieth century have no reason to discredit the story of His physical miracles in the first century. But Jesus was always chary of performing miracles. He had no disposition to work them merely that men might be amazed. The wonder is that He performed so few; that He should have been so self-controlled as not to be forever doing wonders. His miracles were for "signs;" they were to signify something. They are as different from the miracles of the Middle Ages as can be conceived. There is no moral significance in a story of healing by the bones of saints. But in the miracles which Jesus works there is an essential moral

significance, a spiritual lesson, a type of eternal life which the student can not possibly overlook. John seems to have fallen into the habit of his Master's mind, and thought always of His miracles in relation to divine truth. Did Jesus by wondrous multiplication of fishes and loaves feed five thousand men? Then it was a mark of the fact that He was Himself the Bread of Life. Was He able to open the eyes of the blind man? Then it was a sublime illustration of the fact that Jesus is the Light of the World. Could He cure an impotent man at the pool of Bethesda? Then it was a type of the fact that He could restore those who were spiritually impotent. Did He raise Lazarus from the dead? Then it was to prove that He was the Resurrection and the Life.

"Wilt thou be made whole?" It is a very important question. Not every one who whines about his sickness is anxious to be well. There are people who really "enjoy poor health." The professional mendicant likes to tear open his wound and expose it to your sympathetic gaze. He will tell you pathetically the number of hospitals he has entered, what he has suffered at the hands of many physicians. There may be hypocrisies in the sick room. A chronic illness which is not attended by great suffering is often regarded as a luxury not to be given up without a protest. The flowers and fruits which kindly-disposed people bring to the afflicted, the gentle attentions which the merciful and gracious love to pay to the unfortunate—these are exceedingly agreeable. To be the object of a compassionate interest, such as is not bestowed on the well, constitutes a very seductive temptation to remain ill as long as possible. Do you wish to get physical soundness? is a very significant question. Are you willing to accept the responsibilities of being in health? A sick man has the right to be idle. Do you wish to be well and to cease from idleness? An invalid is entitled to delicate attentions. Do you desire to be recovered from your malady, so that you can quit being

a beneficiary and begin to be a benefactor? Such a question strikes at the very center of character.

"Wilt thou be made whole?" is the challenge of Jesus to those who are suffering from spiritual impotency. Do you want to assume the obligations which sound health imposes? It is natural for the morally invalid to be the object of various ministrations. Do you want to be well enough to minister to others who are in need?

Not every one who is sick and talks so interestingly of his disease is really anxious to be relieved of his spiritual sickness. The melancholy of his situation is impressive. He is the object of much solicitude on the part of godly people. His evil habits have victimized him, and he likes his picturesque misery. Lord Byron was guilty of such a foolish self-pity. He showed a mawkish sentimentality about the sins which he never ceased to love. He was pleased to think of himself as the unfortunate prey of fleshly lusts, while he gloried in his shame. Sometimes moral obliquity sinks so low that the sinner plumes himself on his insensibility. A man recently said that he would rather pay ten thousand dollars to retain his delicious thirst for alcoholic beverages, to which he was a slave, than to pay one hundred dollars for its removal. When a soul has dropped into that abyss of spiritual morbidity, he can scarcely hear the voice of God summoning him to liberty and life. Fénelon imagined a dialogue between Ulysses and Grillus, the man whom Circe had turned into a hog. Ulysses wished to bring him back to manhood. But Grillus would not consent. He said, "No, the life of a hog is so much pleasanter." "But," said Ulysses, "Do you make no account of eloquence, poetry, and music?" "No, I would rather grunt than be eloquent like you." "But," asked Ulysses further, "How can you endure this nastiness and stench?" Grillus replied, "It all depends on the taste; the odor is sweeter to me than that of amber, and the filth than the nectar of the gods."

It is a pertinent question for every spiritually impotent person—Do you sincerely wish to get well, or do you prefer to languish amid the porticoes of Bethesda?

"Wilt thou be made whole?" Have you a *will* to be sound in health? The impotent man in the story replies to Jesus: "Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool; but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me." But, have you a will to be well? If the patient has no purpose to secure health, the conscientious doctor may as well throw physic to the dogs. If the sufferer refuses to launch his will into co-operation with the medical practitioner's effort, there is no hope of recovery. What a wondrous therapeutic agency is the will! Wyclif is dying, and the monks enter his chamber to announce the Pope's bull of excommunication. They hold out the promise of restoration to the favor of the Church if he will recant his heretical teachings. Then the mighty reformer raises himself upon his elbow, looks his tormentors in the face, and declares that he will not die, but will live to confute his enemies. And live he does for four long years to push his sublime work for religious freedom. History is brimful of such illustrations, and current life is producing them every day. It is a matter of great moment that a man shall will to throw off the tyranny of disease.

Do you will to be saved from sin? is the question Jesus is asking. The man at Bethesda heard the challenge of the Master, responded to it, and in the expenditure of his will, by an exercise of what we call faith, took up his mat and walked. By Divine energy the latent will of the man was aroused. To Christ's "Rise up and walk" the man gave instant acquiescence, and received immediate healing. "Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon thee." Here again the will is made responsible. "I have a frightful temper," says the impotent sinner; "it sweeps me off my feet." That is, you are temporarily insane. You comfort yourself with the thought that you are irresponsible. Did you ever set your will against it? You have a darling sin; it subverts you, it shames you, but you say you can not help it. Have you set your will against it? Do you want to be made whole? No, you expect

some friend to put you into the pool, and you fancy the magic of its effervescent waters will effect a cure. You look in the wrong direction. Christ is appealing to you, "Rise up and walk!" You hope that some tide of religious emotion will seize you in a fortunate hour and bear you far on toward righteousness and purity. You do not consider that some refluent wave of human passion may sweep you back into moral impotence and misery. It is the constant willing to do the will of God which brings a salvation which endures to the end.

"Wilt thou be made whole?" Your will and His will must coalesce, for the power of the healing is in Christ. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." Pay heed to Him, and health is yours. It is your will yielding subordination to His will which effects the cure. The sympathy and tenderness of Jesus are unparalleled. He resorts to the natural hospital at Bethesda, where He can find a multitude of sick folk, and casts His eye about to discover the worst case there. He journeys up and down the world with the same blessed purpose. The most deplorable sufferers are not those which seem to human eyes the utterly degraded, who wanton in the slums and purlieus of the city, for often these know they are in hell and are eager to escape from torment. The most pitiable cases are the impotent, the self-pitying, the self-righteous, with whom it is difficult for us to have sympathy, but for whom Christ has deep compassion. How wonderful is His tenderness! What surpassing devotion is His! He loves even the fool in his folly. And if it were possible He would save such without their consent. You sometimes fancy it would be better if Jesus would come to the world and take humanity on His shoulders, as Æneas did the old Anchises, and bear them one by one out of sickness into health, out of sin into salvation. And He would do this if it were possible, though it required myriads of years. But by the constitution of the

race this in unthinkable. Religion is not a process by which people are transported to a place, but by which they are transformed in character, and no man becomes godly until he wants to be saved with a wistful eagerness that counts no effort too great. "Wilt thou be made whole? Rise up and walk." The Master calls, but He calls in vain, until the impotent put forth their latent energy to hear His voice and respond to His summons.

XIII.

DISCOURSE ON LIFE—A DEFENSE.

CHAPTER V. 17-47.

In the four Gospels, or rather in the four books of the one Gospel, the apostle St. John has lifted higher and far more sublimely than the other three his proclamation, and in lifting it up he has wished our hearts also to be lifted up.—*Augustine.*

THIS is the first of those public discourses recorded by John in which Jesus defends Himself against His accusers. Others of like purpose occur in later chapters of this gospel. This one marks the real beginning of that conflict with the authorities which only ended with the murder of Jesus. It is of vast significance. "This five minutes' talk with the Jews contains probably the most important truth ever uttered upon earth." (*Dods.*) The discourse falls into three parts, as follows: 1. Jesus justifies Himself on the basis of His filial relation to God the Father. 2. He affirms that this relation is attested by the witness of the Father. 3. He exposes the reason which leads the Jews to reject Him.

I. JESUS JUSTIFIED BY HIS RELATION TO THE FATHER (17-30).

1. **His Line of Defense Indicated (17, 18).** Jesus does not answer the charge of Sabbath-breaking in any direct way, though He might have done so, since works of mercy were allowable. He lays down His position at once in the words, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." His justification is in His unity with the Father, who is superior to His own laws. God's rest after creation, on which the Sab-

bath law is erected, was not one of inactivity, but of beneficent work, "and man's true rest is not a rest *from* human earthly labor, but a rest *for* divine heavenly labor." (*Westcott.*) No Sabbath law has interfered with God's activity, and none must prevent the Son's labors of love. The Jews were perfectly right in supposing that Christ made Himself equal with God, and hence they shift the accusation from Sabbath-breaking to blasphemy, and seek His destruction more violently.

2. **His Filial Relationship Emphasized (19, 20).** A marked characteristic of Christ's various defenses is herein illustrated. It is His habit to insist on the very claims which provoke assault with even greater emphasis than accompanies their original statement. The charge of blasphemy involves antagonism between Him and God. But He is the Son of God; therefore no hostility can exist. He does what He sees the Father do. He is constrained by the Father's love. Greater works will result from this filial relationship, and they will cause still greater astonishment.

3. **His Filial Relationship Proven (21-30).** In two wonderful ways His essential oneness with the Father is shown: 1. By Christ's power to impart spiritual life. The healing of the impotent man is a type of His power to quicken the spiritually impotent into life. This is one of the "greater works" which He has promised will cause them to marvel. His power to do this is based on His unity with the Father. The Father has committed this prerogative to Him, that all men may honor Him. To refuse Him is to refuse the Father; to receive Him is to obtain eternal life. Many will hereafter have this experience; some have already attained it (v. 25). The Son has this power in His own person, and also the authority to pronounce judgment (v. 26), "because He is the Son of man," that is, having become man, He is endowed with the two-fold function of possessing life in Himself, and of executing judg-

ment (v. 27. Compare Phil. ii, 6-10). 2. By His power to raise the physically dead to life (28-30). There will be a final resurrection and a final judgment, not dependent upon the co-operation of the human will, as was the case with the healing of the impotent man, but as the result of the Son's command. But His will is the will of the Father, without whom He does nothing (v. 30). Thus the defense comes round to the starting point, Christ's eternal fellowship with the Father.

II. THE DIVINE WITNESS TO THIS RELATIONSHIP (31-40).

1. **The Necessity for This Witness (31, 32).** Jesus admits that His own personal witness unsupported would apparently be open to suspicion. Moreover, if His witness did not agree with that of the Father it could properly be discredited. But He knows the witness of the Father to be in exact correspondence with His own inner consciousness of filial relationship with God (v. 32).

2. **Other Witnesses Suggested (33-35).** The witness of John the Baptist is a type, and it is true. Jesus does not depend upon this, or any other human witness, but He mentions it because it is probably in their minds. While He does not rest upon it for the vindication of His claims, yet He knows that they reposed much confidence in the Baptist, and He will use any plea which may be effective with them, in order that some of them may be saved if possible. John was a temporary light of great value, and they rejoiced in him for a time, and he pointed to Christ.

3. **The Supreme Witness—the Father (36-40).** The Father's witness is made apparent in several ways. (1) The works which the Father has sent Him to do are a visible witness of God's favor. (2) The manifestation of God to their consciences, as Christ spoke to them, was a sufficient witness if their hearts

had not been false. (3) The Scriptures, which testify of Christ, are a plain witness for those who search them aright. Despite these several expressions of God, in which He clearly bears witness to Christ, they will not come unto Him for life.

III. THE WITNESS REJECTED THROUGH UNBELIEF (41-47).

Unbelief is a moral state, not a mere intellectual attitude. The Jews reject Christ, not because they can not believe in Him on the strength of the testimony given, but because they do not want to believe in Him. He does not need their favor. Honor from men is nothing to Him, and He refuses it, but He knows that the love of God is not in their hearts, and that this accounts for their rejection of Him. They are thoroughly worldly in their ambitions. If He had suited Himself to their carnal mood they would have accepted Him with enthusiasm, but in their temper they will not receive the Son who comes in the name of the Father. They are self-condemned. Moreover, they can offer no defense on the ground of rigid orthodoxy, for even Moses, on whom they profess to rely, is totally against them.

Hymn No. 1.

He speaks, and, listening to His voice,
New life the dead receive;
The mournful, broken hearts rejoice;
The humble poor believe.—*Charles Wesley.*

Personal Questions:

1. Does Jesus require any apology in my heart?
2. Has He given life unto me?

Life and Life Again.

"As the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself."—JOHN v, 26.

Corot made a study of a little peasant girl one year near Arras. On his return some months later he learned that the child had been drowned. Carrying his sketch to the father he said, "Here's your daughter come back!" The peasant would never permit that portrait of his child to be loaned to an exhibition, or to be seen by any one but himself, and directed in his will that it be laid on his heart, to sleep with him in the tomb. Even the pictorial shadow of life is precious to those who have been bereft of their beloved. But Jesus has promised the life again in defiance of the utmost Death can do.

Life can only be imparted by Him who "hath life in Himself." Jesus came in the form of man, but He differs from all other men in this respect, that while other men receive life, He is life. His most intimate friend on earth said that "in Him was life, and the life was the light of men." He said of Himself, "I am the way, the truth and the life." When He met Death during His pilgrimage through the world, as was frequently His fortune, He did not shrink back from his presence, as we do. He said, "I am the resurrection and the life," and Death withdrew to his dark domain. Jesus made a daring claim, and it was bound to provoke hostile criticism. But the lucidity of His mind and the perfection of His character compel us to believe that He was very sane and very sincere when He said, "I am life." Moreover, He has demonstrated His authority in all the ranges of what we call life. We have never seen Him cure the sick, or minister to a mind diseased, or raise the dead; but we have beheld Him rousing men sunken in sin to the consciousness of fellowship with God. And having witnessed this miracle in character, we are convinced that He can perform any lesser marvel which the exigencies of human life may require. We believe that He could go through all the hospitals of the world and turn all the

sick and impotent folk out with abounding health, and that He could march through all the asylums of the world and make lunacy a forgotten malady—for He is life. This power He showed in healing the man at the pool of Bethesda, who had been under the spell of an infirmity for thirty-eight years. And this is an illustration of Christ's ability to impart life apart from any human agency, except the response of the human will, in the exercise of faith in Him.

What irony there is in the attempt of the Jews to slay Him who is life! The sleuths were on the track of Jesus. They could not dispute the cure He had effected. The evidence of it was in that man walking off with his mattress. But the work had been wrought on the Sabbath-day—O, monstrous iniquity! One can fancy these persecutors to be quite hilarious in spirit, though they conceal their joy under a decent solemnity of manner, for they have now discovered an opportunity for gratifying their grudge against this disturber of their peace. They think more of the Sabbath than they do of human life. Thanks to the murderous designs of these pious inquisitors, we have in the heroic defense which Jesus now delivers a thorough exposition of the ground on which He exerts His authority to impart life.

It would have been an easy thing for Jesus to dispose of the accusation that He had violated the Sabbath law by recourse to the Mosaic code. On other occasions when similar charges were lodged against Him He took this course. But in the present instance He does not defend Himself in this fashion. He ignores all such considerations, and with a simple thrust strikes at the core of the whole matter when He says, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." The activity which characterizes God is not limited by any narrow Sabbath laws which have been passed for the benefit of mankind. From the hour when His creative work was concluded, and He pronounced it good, until this moment He has not ceased to pour Himself out in the sustaining of His uni-

verse, in the impartation of life to His creatures, in the work of redemption for those who are lost. "My Father and I are one. He worketh until now, and I work. His will is Mine; His work is My work. At any moment I am ready at His command to do whatsoever He desireth."

Instantly the charge of an infraction of the Sabbath law is dropped. His accusers pass over the whole matter, and charge Him with identifying Himself with God, and therefore with being guilty of blasphemy. Their instinct was correct, their motive contemptible. It is the assumption on the part of Jesus that He is God, and that life proceeds from Him inevitably, that creates the sore place in the proud heart of the unbeliever. But if that assumption is not justified it will be difficult to find any truth in the New Testament that one need proclaim with urgency.

Passing now from this general statement of the basis on which He has assumed authority to impart life to men, Jesus bursts forth, first, into a general statement of His divine right to raise the dead and judge them, and then to a more particular statement, in a concrete and explicit form, of His rights in the moral and external domains now and forever with relation to the destiny of mankind. He virtually says to these accusers, "You profess to be scandalized because I am supposed to have violated the Sabbath laws, and because I have claimed to be divine in My own person; what will you say when I tell you that all power is Mine? that I am the judge of the quick and the dead, and that by My own voice I shall call men from the tomb, and in the end shall be the final and absolute arbiter of the destinies of human beings? For, as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom He will."

When the good grandmother of Millet found that the artist had gone to the limit of propriety in certain of his paintings, she wrote to him not in severe censure, but with gentle wisdom, "Follow the example of that man

of your own profession who used to say, 'I paint for eternity!' For no cause whatever permit yourself to do evil works, or to lose sight of the presence of God. With St. Jerome think incessantly that you hear the trumpet that shall summon us to judgment."

This godly admonition harmonizes with the facts of life. For Jesus has made it plain that judgment is constantly confronting us. "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: that all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father which hath sent Him. Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth My word and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life. Verily, verily, I say unto you the hour is coming. and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live."

These words evidently refer to the offer of spiritual life. And men are judged by their manner of receiving the proposal of Jesus to impart life to them. The impotent man at the pool of Bethesda was judged in this fashion. Had he refused the command of Jesus to rise up and walk, he would have continued in helplessness, and his condemnation would have been written in his persistent infirmity. Having responded to the call of Jesus, he rose to renewed life and escaped condemnation. In this way he was self-judged. And this is the solemn fact with regard to all men. Said John LaFarge, "We do not judge a work of art; it judges us." In the presence of Jesus Christ, men are compelled to pass judgment upon themselves. Their attitude toward Him and His offer of eternal life determines their characters; and the judgment of the hereafter will base itself upon the position they occupied relative to Him in this probationary sphere.

On a plain tablet inserted in the wall of St. Giles, Cripplegate, London, the traveler may read these words, which compose the concluding line in the epitaph of the

Rev. John Foxe, *"Vita vitæ mortalis est spes vitæ immortalis"*—"The hope of immortal life is the life of mortal life." Surely this odd Latin inscription carries a glorious truth. Human life loses its cheer when the hope of immortality vanishes.

Twenty years before his death Kingsley was speaking of that great change to which all flesh is appointed, and said, "God forgive me if I am wrong, but I look forward to it with an intense and reverent curiosity." That was the sentiment of a man interested in all that science could teach him concerning life, and eager for all that religion could reveal to him regarding the future.

But where shall we find the stable foundation for our belief in immortality—that hope of our mortal life? How can we be assured that our "reverent curiosity" about the things after death shall ever be satisfied? Jesus gives reply, as He addresses Himself to the great question of the resurrection. He does not say that He is now calling the dead from the tomb, but that "the hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." This is the supreme, the only satisfactory and complete argument in favor of a future life. Naturally immortality is regarded by many persons an unprovable hypothesis; it may belong to us as our birth-right, but the Bible does not say so in unmistakable terms. And the argument from analogy falls to pieces in the presence of the severest scientific investigation of our day. No man who stands by the bedside of a dying friend and observes the process of dissolution can see anything in the physical phenomena of man's death that differentiates it from the death of an animal. Without the resurrection of the New Testament in the person of Jesus Christ, there is no absolute foundation upon which one can rest a hope of the future life. Plato may "reason well;" so well that some of his disciples are persuaded to commit suicide in order to reach a life of bliss; but there is no argument from the day of Plato to our own that can support the soul that

questions the fact of a future life. The only sure foundation of such a hope is the personal guarantee of Him who is "Life," who shall some day send His voice thrilling through the world and call the just and unjust out of the tomb to receive judgment.

But this promise cuts in opposite directions. It says that the unjust, as well as the just, shall come at Christ's command. There is no escaping His summons. "Whither shall I go from Thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, 'Surely the darkness shall cover me,' even the night shall be light about me. Yea the darkness hideth not from Thee, but the night shineth as the day." There is no escape from Him except escape in Him. Martin Luther said, "If I saw Jesus Christ standing before me with a drawn sword, I would still fling myself into His arms." "Ye will not come unto Me that you might have life," is the sad plaint of the Master of Life and Conqueror of Death. Jesus is the life, the resurrection, the only hope of eternal life, the judge of the quick and the dead, the apportioner of the rewards of the men who have been hearers of His voice and have known His love, the distributor of recompense to those who in deep, moral insensibility have refused to hear His voice and have chosen death instead of life.

The destiny of the human race centers in Jesus Christ. But it could not rest in gentler hands than those which were pierced for man's redemption.

XIV.

SIGNS AT THE SEA OF GALILEE.

CHAPTER VI. 1-21.

Above all do I like to read the Gospel of John.
—Claudius.

ONCE again we observe how John's artistic instinct guides him to place over against one another two incidents in the life of Jesus which are alike and yet unlike. We have here a miracle on the land and a miracle on the water. In the former Christ is portrayed as the support of life; in the latter as the guide of men. In one He is described as enabling His disciples to meet an emergency with the multitude which has been occasioned by His presence; in the other as assisting them in a difficulty which has arisen during His absence. In the first case He helps them to help others; in the second to help themselves.

I. THE FIRST SIGN—FEEDING THE MULTITUDE (1-15).

This incident, coming close upon the one narrated in the preceding chapter, illustrates the fact that John makes no attempt to preserve a precise chronological order. There are many such gaps in his record. He is not writing a biography, but presenting a series of characteristic scenes in the life of Jesus which he deems suitable for his purpose, as declared in xx, 31. Frequently he selects material not employed by any of the other evangelists, but here, and elsewhere occasionally, he uses in his own way and for his own ends what others have recorded. This is the only instance of a miracle narrated by all four of the evangelists. Compare, for details omitted here, Matt. xiv, 13-21; Mark vi, 30-44;

Luke ix, 10-17. This is indeed the only incident of any kind in the life of Jesus before His final visit to Jerusalem, which is set down by all of the gospel writers. As Jesus had shown to the Samaritans and to the people of Jerusalem, so now to the Galileans He would demonstrate that He was the giver of eternal life. The story of the Feeding is the text for the discourse on the bread of life, which is given in the same chapter.

1. **The Occasion of the Miracle (1-4).** Jesus has withdrawn to the eastern shore of Tiberias, by which name the Sea of Galilee was known to classical writers, a designation used by John alone in the New Testament, in order that He might secure rest. He had arrived at a place called Bethsaida Julias (Luke ix, 10). The feast of the Passover was near, a fact which both gave point to the miracle and also accounted for the increased multitude which pressed upon Him. Hosts of people were on their way to Jerusalem, many of whom joined themselves to the crowd which had followed Jesus around the head of the lake, eager to witness further miracles. Jesus had retired to a mountain with His disciples, but His retreat was incapable of concealing Him. Instead of resenting the intrusion of the mob, His sympathies were awakened for the weary and hungry host.

2. **The Embarrassment of the Disciples (5-9).** The narrative is plainly that of an eye-witness. Philip is tested by the question, "Whence shall we buy bread?" This betrays no anxiety on the part of Jesus, John explains in a parenthesis, but is a good question to stir up a practical man like Philip, and show him his dependence upon a higher power. Philip's perplexity. The money required for such an expenditure is too great a demand for him. Andrew's suggestion. The lad with the barley loaves and the little fishes. The supply is inadequate for the demand.

3. **Christ's Mastery of the Situation (10-13).** He first employs the means at hand. He insists upon a systematic arrangement of the five thousand beneficiaries. He pronounces a blessing upon the meager resources at their command. He calls the disciples into requisition as helpers. He satisfies all. He teaches a lesson in ecomony by requiring the fragments to be preserved (a feature of the story which we can scarcely fancy would be invented). He shows the fullness of His bounty by the excess of supply over demand.

4. **The Immediate Effect of the Miracle (14, 15).** The populace were persuaded that Christ was the greater prophet than Moses which had been predicted, and were determined forthwith to carry Him away to Jerusalem and crown Him their king at the Passover. Expecting a material kingdom, they were not yet capable of the true spiritual conception of the Messiah which Jesus was to teach them. Jesus must therefore reject their earthly undertaking, and having come down from the mountain toward the shore in order to perform this miracle, He now withdrew again to a mountain, this time to be entirely alone. Even His disciples, who might naturally be expected to share the expectations and ambitions of the people, were not permitted to accompany Him.

II. THE SECOND SIGN—WALKING ON THE WATER (16-21).

This incident is also related in Matt. xiv, 22-33, where it is said that Jesus "constrained His disciples to get into a ship, and to go before Him unto the other side," and in Mark vi, 45-52. In both places other details omitted here are recorded.

1. **On the Sea Without Christ (16-19).** At evening time they put forth to reach Capernaum. Darkness comes down upon them, and the Master is absent. A storm sweeps down upon them with the suddenness which travelers testify is common in that region.

They are in great peril when they have gone about half way across the lake. Then Jesus appears.

2. **On the Sea With Christ (19-21).** It is in the fourth watch, as Mark records, that is, somewhere between three and six o'clock in the morning, when they descry Jesus in the dim light of the approaching day. At first they are terrified. But the Master dispels their fears. He is not a phantom, but their great helper. Matthew inserts the episode of Peter attempting to walk on the sea. The other evangelists omit it. When they received Jesus into the boat their troubles were at an end. The winds ceased, the waves subsided, and they were brought to their desired haven.

Hymn No. 482.

Jesus, Savior, pilot me
Over life's tempestuous sea;
Unknown waves before me roll,
Hiding rock and treacherous shoal;
Chart and compass came from Thee;
Jesus, Savior, pilot me.—*Edward Hopper.*

Personal Questions:

1. Have I placed Jesus at the head of my table?
2. Have I admitted Christ into my boat?

Caring for the Crowd.

"Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little."
—JOHN vi, 7.

This miracle is also a parable. If it were not, John might not have taken the trouble to record it, for he was always most concerned for the spiritual significance

of Christ's deeds. Jesus did enough other extraordinary things which prove His lordship over nature and His compassion for humanity to make this unnecessary, if there were nothing in it but the fact of satisfying the hunger of the crowd. The Master Himself certainly attached a profounder meaning to it, for He made it the basis of a very wonderful discourse on the Bread of Life. Many inspiring suggestions lie below the surface of this narrative which the thoughtful reader will readily discover. Among these the following appear.

Whenever an emergency arises in the work of Christ's disciples, money is not a consideration of the first importance, if Jesus is in the company. Philip apparently did not understand this. Modern disciples frequently show a similar lack of intelligence. Philip said in effect, "If we had plenty of money we could easily meet this emergency." He cast his calculating eye over the crowd swarming up the mountain side, panting, tired, and hungry, and, quickly estimating what it would cost to feed this multitude, he said within himself, "This is an occasion when a well-filled wallet would be a positive convenience." The financial aspects of the problem were uppermost in his mind. Twentieth century Christians betray the same kind of solicitude. They recognize that it is the peculiar work of the Church to provide what the tired, panting, exhausted world requires. They fancy that an abundance of money would afford the perfect solution of the difficulties which embarrass them. In this impression they are sadly astray.

Service is really the consideration of first importance —a man ready to act, and possessing qualities which equip him for action. A man of distinction once declared that, if he had a fortune, he would station a Christian preacher in every great center of the world's population and command him to tell the story of the Cross to the surging crowds. If this transaction were effected, the important element in it would be the men who were selected for this great work, and not the money

paid to them. It is conceivable that an army of men might enlist for such a service who would be unqualified to fulfill its sublime requirements. It is the happy habit of millionaires in our day to bestow great sums of money upon institutions of learning to erect buildings and to endow scholastic chairs, but in every such case the thing of prime importance is that the men who occupy these chairs and teach in these buildings shall be endowed with qualifications necessary for their great business. It is conceivable that a vast body of men might be subsidized to assume these positions who would not adequately fulfill the obligations laid upon them.

Service has no real financial equivalent. When the salary of the President of the United States was doubled a few years ago, it was not with expectation of getting twice as much work out of him as had heretofore been exacted. His value to the country depends not upon his actual income, but upon his personal qualities.

We often place too high an estimate upon the purchasing power of money. It can not buy happiness, or health, or wisdom, or character. In can not secure divine approval or human favor. The epitaph written for Epictetus ran as follows: "I was Epictetus, a slave, and maimed in body, and a beggar for poverty, and *dear to the immortals.*" The body of Epictetus could be bought, but his mind could not be enslaved, and his soul was absolutely free. Character is the supreme asset of life, and character is the final qualification for service.

The best things in human history have been achieved without money. Jesus had no *income,* but His *output* was enormous. Hardly anybody in Nazareth was poorer than He was, but Cæsar on his throne was not more munificent in gifts. When the apostles were just embarking on an enterprise which was to shake the world, they were forced to tell a beggar that they had neither silver nor gold. At a time when he was writing documents which would influence the literature of all the following centuries, and was doing work which would affect all modern civilization, Paul was compelled to keep body and soul together by stitching tent-cloth. Some of the

greatest monuments of literary genius have been the productions of men reduced to abject poverty. They sold their books to buy bread, but the world did not contain money enough to purchase their intellects.

What Philip needed was not money, but a sense of obligation strong enough to enable him to see his immediate duty. The thing required was not to send the people away, but to send them away filled. The question was not how to get rid of a hard situation, but how to meet it adequately. The readiness to serve is the first requisite, and if Jesus is in the company the ability to serve will follow.

Nevertheless, if financial expenditure should prove to be the method of meeting any emergency arising in the work of Christ's disciples, it must be employed, if Jesus is in the company. Perhaps Philip would have balked at this proposition. One can fancy him saying, "We can not afford to spend thirty-five dollars on bread for this mob." Probably that would have bankrupted the entire company. If every wallet in their possession had been emptied it might not have reached two hundred denarii; but if they had this amount in their possession, and Jesus required it, there would be no room for controversy. His command is, "Give ye them to eat." The cost of answering this draft is not to be counted. The point is that with Christ's compassion on the multitude there was nothing to do short of feeding the whole mass.

The amount of help we give to the miserable is exactly proportioned to the amount of genuine compassion we have. Some people are more liberal in their opinions than they are in their contributions. A sentiment of pity is of no value unless it is transmuted into an act of mercy. Not only is it fruitless so far as the object of compassion is concerned, but it is positively injurious to the man who expresses it in mere words of sympathy. You have felt on shipboard the disagreeable sensation produced when the screw of the vessel has been flung out of the water by the heaving of the sea. Released from

the resistance of the water, the propeller spins around with incredible rapidity, making the ship tremble as though smitten by some terrible blow. The wear upon the machinery in such an event is doubtless more severe than would be effected by numberless revolutions in the ordinary way. So compassion expended in mere sentimental words, and finding no expression in practical deeds, will shake the whole moral fabric of a man and inflict permanent injury upon his soul.

At a Christmas celebration on the west coast of Africa a few years ago, when converted natives brought of their meager possessions to show their devotion to Christ, a young girl only recently saved from paganism brought a silver coin worth about eighty-five cents, and handed this to the missionary as her gift to the Savior. The good man was astounded at the size of the offering, and hesitated to accept it, supposing it must have been obtained dishonestly; but when he delicately asked for an explanation of this lavish gift, the convert told him that she had gone to a neighboring planter and bound herself out to him as a slave for the rest of her life for this coin. Thus she brought the whole monetary equivalent of her life and placed it as a single gift at the feet of her Lord. That is the kind of consecration which Jesus expects of those who have sworn eternal fealty to Him. It is not our duty to enslave ourselves to any human master. It is our rare privilege to dedicate ourselves and our substance entirely to our Lord.

In meeting an emergency which may arise in the work of Christ's disciples, calculations are not to be based on the extent of one's personal resources, if Jesus is in the company. Andrew evidently did not realize this. He suggests that the boy with the five barley loaves and the two small fishes can be induced to part with his store, but he asks, "What are these among so many?" The response of Jesus is, "Give ye them to eat; ye have not reckoned with Me." In the presence of that throng the paltry biscuits and insignificant fishes were not worth

mentioning. But Jesus was worth mentioning. When Antigonus was about to enter a great sea fight with the armada of Ptolemy, and his pilot saw with consternation the vast array before him, he cried out with dismay, "See how many more than ourselves are against us!" but Antigonus replied, "It is true that if you count numbers they exceed us, but how much value do you place upon me?"

The Church frequently says, "We suffer great limitations; we are badly located, our environment is unfavorable, our outlook is unpromising; circumstances are against us; no adequate funds are in our treasury; our loaves and fishes are absurdly inadequate." But all the time Jesus is virtually saying, "You may have no money, and you may have no commissary department, but you have ME."

There is, in fact, no emergency arising in the work of Christ's disciples that has not been anticipated, if Jesus is in the company. The record says that He asked Philip about the possibility of buying food for this crowd in order to prove His disciple, and not to satisfy His own mind, for "He Himself knew what He would do." Man's embarrassment is Christ's convenience. "Send them away," said the disciples; "Make the men sit down," said Jesus. The preparedness of Jesus is one of His most striking peculiarities. He knew what He would do when He looked out upon this great multitude. He knew that under His guiding providence the loaves and the fishes would be multiplied into a sufficient feast for all. He knew what He would do when His terror-stricken disciples called Him from His sleeping posture in the stern of the boat tossed by the turbulent waves of the sea. He knew that He would stand out upon the prow of the staggering craft and send His voice out o'er the boiling waters, and calm the waves, and quiet the winds. He knew what He would do when He was informed that His friend Lazarus had died. He knew that He would stand before His rock-hewn sepulcher, and bid

the man come forth, and would receive Him anew into joyous fellowship. He knew what He would do when men had cruelly slain Him upon the cross, and loving hands had placed Him in the tomb. He knew that He would break the bars of death, and stand forth to greet the rising sun and to receive the acclaim of the faithful as King of men. He knew what He would do when the persecution following the martyrdom of Stephen threatened to devastate the infant Church. He knew He would scatter His followers everywhere throughout the Roman Empire and ultimately conquer it to the remotest bound. He knew what He would do when for two hundred years the arms of paganism were turned against His followers. He knew that He would raise up men of culture and wisdom who would turn the very weapons of heathen philosophy against His relentless foes, smiting them hip and thigh, and making the wrath of man to praise Him. He knew what He would do when gross darkness brooded o'er the face of the Church in the Middle Ages. He knew He would summon such men as Huss, Wyclif, and Tyndale to unlock the treasures of the divine wisdom and bring the light of truth upon the minds of men. He knew what He would do when in later centuries error and superstition had crept into the teachings of His recreant ministers. He knew He would call out such champions of the faith as Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin, who would propagate anew the forgotten doctrine of salvation by faith in His name. He knew what He would do when in the eighteenth century the religious life of the English people had been sapped by rationalism in literature, unfaithfulness in the ministry, and lax morals in the Church. He knew He would call out Whitefield and the Wesleys, and the noble host of their associates, who would preach evangelical religion throughout the dominions of the Anglo-Saxon civilization, and summon the Church to more earnest endeavor than had ever blest mankind. He knew what He would do when French infidelity had poisoned institutions of learning in America and had secured for its advocates some of the most eminent men in the nation.

He knew that by the revival of pure and undefiled religion, through the preaching of flaming evangelists, He would revolutionize the civic, social, and moral condition of the whole American people. He knows now what He will do when His Church is confronted by serious and apparently unhopeful conditions, which bilious-minded critics are prone to regard as incurable. He will gird Himself and meet the issues with omnipotent energy, and show Himself triumphant over every opposing force.

It is ours to remember that loyalty to Him demands our perfect submission to His will. If the means at our disposal are placed under His control they will be indefinitely multiplied under the power of His beneficent purpose. We do not know whether the food used to refresh the throng was multiplied in the hands of Jesus when He blessed it, or in the hands of the disciples when they delivered it, or in the hands of the crowd when they received it; but it was multiplied. That is the fact of significance. We do not know whether our money begins to grow when the minister prays over it, or when the officials of the Church begin to distribute it, or when the beneficiaries of our bounty receive it; but it does grow under some subtle law of Divine Providence. If we yield our all to Him, it is His purpose to increase our store until it becomes sufficient to meet every demand made upon it.

Whittier, in one of his most beautiful poems, describes the Abbot of a monastery kneeling at the foot of the altar absorbed in prayer. His devotions are disturbed by a sound outside the walls, which seems like the wail of a lost soul. Looking from the casement, he sees a wretched woman, her white hair flowing in the wind, her face distorted with agony, her wrinkled hands clasped in pathetic appeal, crying for alms. Her first-born son is enslaved to the Moors. She begs for money for his redemption. The Abbot's soul is moved with compassion. "What I can, I give—my prayers," he replies. But the woman implores him not to mock her suffering. It is not prayers, but gold, she craves. Even while she speaks perhaps her first-born is dying. Then

the Abbot tells her that the monks are forever giving, and therefore have nothing. The woman cries: "Give me the silver candlesticks on either side of the great crucifix!" Then the Abbot, acknowledging that God loves mercy more than sacrifice, with trembling hands, takes down the silver candlesticks and places them within the beggar's palms.

"And as she vanished down the linden shade,
He bowed his head and for forgiveness prayed.

So the day passed, and when the twilight came,
He woke to find the chapel all aflame,
And, dumb with grateful wonder, to behold
Upon the altar candlesticks of gold."

Jesus asks not only your gold and silver, bearing the superscription of the nation you serve, but the gold and silver of your intelligence, your social position, your intellectual ability, your refined character. And, if, with perfect consecration, you yield to His compassionate spirit, He will doubtless multiply your power and influence as wondrously as He multiplied the loaves and fishes by the shore of sacred Galilee.

XV.

DISCOURSE ON THE BREAD OF LIFE.

CHAPTER VI. 22-71.

The doctrine of the Word made flesh shows us God uniting Himself most intimately with our nature, manifesting Himself in a human form, for the very end of making us partners of His own perfection.—*Channing.*

THE people had wished to make Jesus a king. He had escaped first by retiring to a mountain solitude, and then by passing over the lake to the western shore, evidently not far from Capernaum. Hither with some difficulty many of those who had witnessed His feeding of the multitude followed Him. (22-25.)

I. DISCOURSE ON THE BREAD OF LIFE (26-59).

This deliverance falls into three divisions or conversations: *a.* Verses 26-40; *b.* Verses 41-51; *c.* Verses 52-59.

1. First Conversation (26-40).

Question: How is life sustained?
Answer: The Son of man gives life.

(1) *The Mistaken Quest of Life* (26, 27). Introduced by a simple appeal: "When camest thou hither?" Response of Jesus equivalent to saying, "You do not seek Me but what you can obtain from Me, and your desires are material, not spiritual." Insight of Jesus. False aims in modern seekers after Christ. Work for imperishable food. This the Son of man will provide. He has been authorized to do so, and His mission has been approved by many wonderful signs.

(2) *The True Way to Life* (28, 29). Belief in the Son of man. Introduced by the question, "What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?"

(3) *The Proof of this Process* (30-33). Introduced by a question: "What attestation of this have we?" Moses and the manna proffered as an illustration of the kind of evidence they desire. Jesus responds that the proof is in the gift itself (33).

(4) *The Son of Man the Gift of Life in Himself* (34, 35). Introduced by a request: "Evermore give us this bread!" The satisfying nature of this food for life.

(5) *Appropriation of the Gift Through Faith* (36-38). Some do not exercise faith in the Son of man, and hence do not receive life. Those whom the Father draws, that is, who have the right spiritual perception, do appropriate this gift.

(6) *Life thus Appropriated a Present Possession, to be followed by Resurrection* (39, 40). Distinctions in faith. Discriminate between faith which is merely belief resting on sufficient evidence and faith which is the personal appropriation of Christ.

2. Second Conversation (41-51).

Question: How can the Son of man give eternal life? Answer: The Son of man gives Himself.

(1) *The Jews Scandalized* (41. 42). Introduced by a murmuring among themselves (41). Disturbed by the claim that a man whose pedigree and history they know is the source of life (42).

(2) *Spiritual Preparation Required* (43, 44). Without the drawing of the Father men can not apprehend this unique idea. From the human side it is based on man's will; on the Divine side it rests on God's power.

(3) *Old Testament Promises* (45, 46). The Father draws men by enlightening them. Jesus does not quote the ancient Scriptures to show the ground of

His teaching, but to confirm His doctrines in the minds of those who rely upon these writings.

(4) *The Necessary Co-operation of the Believer* (47-50). The teaching is not sufficient. Receiving and appropriating are indispensable. This is an act of faith without which the Divine gift is in vain.

(5) *The Gift of the Son of Man* (51). Himself in the fullness of His humanity. "Flesh" is human nature in its entirety. Death foreshadowed in the word, to be brought out more clearly in "blood."

3. Third Conversation (52-59).

Question: How can one partake of the flesh of the Son of man?

Answer: By a spiritual union with Him.

(1) *The Puzzle of the Jews* (52). Introduced by a striving among themselves. "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" The bread and the flesh are now identical.

(2) *The Teaching in Detail* (53-55). "Flesh" and "blood." Life and death are plainly involved. Only by partaking of the virtues of Christ's life and death can the believer appropriate by faith the Son of man.

(3) *Personal Union Between Christ and the Believer Thus Established* (56). Christ the source of life, and the end of life. The mutuality of relation.

(4) *Fullness of Life Thus Secured* (57, 58). As the life of the Father is imparted to the Son, so the life of the Son of man is imparted to all true believers.

II. ISSUE OF THE DISCOURSE IN BELIEF AND UNBELIEF (60-71).

The discourse on the Bread of Life is a trial to the faith of the disciples.

1. **The Murmuring Followers (60).** The "hard saying." Not difficult to understand, but to accept. In some respects revolting to thought. Chiefly hard to receive because it involved submission and sacrifice.

2. **The Response of Jesus (61, 62).** Greater difficulties are yet to appear; for example, return to heaven of the Son of man.

3. **Spiritual Perception Necessary to Discipleship (63-65).** "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing. The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life."

4. **The Disciples Divided (66).** The strain upon their loyalty is too great for any but the most spiritually-minded to bear. They have hoped for a monarch who would bring them glory; they are promised only a Savior who will bring them eternal life. The balancing of earthly and divine interests turns the scale toward self and away from God.

5. **Peter's Confession of Faith (67-69).** Three affirmations—1. No one else to whom he can go; 2. Jesus is entirely sufficient; 3. He is the Messiah. The trusting disciple will therefore cleave to Him.

6. **The Apostasy of Judas Predicted (70, 71).** Even the choice of the Lord does not prevent one of the apostles from becoming an apostate.

Hymn No. 325.

Break Thou the bread of life,
Dear Lord, to me,
As Thou didst break the loaves
Beside the sea.

—*Mary A. Lathbury.*

Personal Questions:

1. Have I spent more labor for the meat that perishes than for the meat that endures unto everlasting life?

2. Does my faith in the Son of God stumble at the fact that He is also the Son of man?

3. Can I utter Peter's confession of faith with a good conscience?

A Hard Saying.

"I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread he shall live forever; and the bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."—JOHN vi, 51.

"This is an hard saying; who can hear it?" exclaimed the disciples when Christ had finished His wonderful discourse on the Bread of Life. "Saying" means doctrine, and "hard" means difficult to accept. It was not incomprehensible, but it was unpalatable. The reasons for their murmuring against it are not obscure.

In the first place, the teaching was offensive to their natural propensities and to their worldly traditions. It placed the emphasis on spiritual rather than material needs. "Labor not for the meat which perisheth," said Jesus, "but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life." He tells them that they have not swarmed after Him because they were eager for Him, but because they wanted to secure some advantage for themselves. They had a joyous recollection of the loaves and the fishes with which He had fed them the day before.

Is not that the way of the world? If it could be made apparent that attending public worship would increase business, multiply incomes, and insure various material benefits, the churches in America would overflow with auditors, and we should need to station policemen in front of these edifices to prevent the people from breaking in before the doors were open.

These old Jews were a very religious people. That is the characteristic which distinguishes them as a nation. It has often been observed that the ideal of the Greek was knowledge, of the Roman social order, and of the Jew religion. But the Hebrew has always wanted to mix his religion with politics, social advantage, financial profit. And whenever a leader has appeared who has sought to turn his mind toward exclusively spiritual ideals, the attempt has not met with popular approval. It was the general conviction of the Jew in olden times

that it was profitable to serve Jehovah, and the only blessing he recognized was the blessing of prosperity.

There are others of like persuasion, though with a different nationality. We Americans are a very religious people. We say so on the coins we mint, in the Thanksgiving proclamations which we issue, in the prayers we pronounce over legislatures, congresses, and political conventions. But we also put a large element of self-interest into our religious sentiment. We can not fully indorse the Christian dictum, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness," as a practical working basis for life. "Take no thought for the morrow," we think a very delusive kind of idealism. We have a sharp eye to the main chance.

Epictetus records that when Archelaus sent a message to Socrates informing him that it was his royal intention to make him rich, the philosopher bade the messenger tell his master that at Athens four quarts of meal might be bought for three-pence, and the fountains were overflowing with water. Such a contempt for wealth can scarcely be understood by the people of this generation, and the policy of avoiding riches for the sake of living more simply would be scouted by the majority of men in our time as a piece of folly. The meat that perishes has a very large claim on the attention of the average American. This is not strange, in view of the fact that every book and periodical he reads, every voice that smites his ear on the street, and every other impression which is made on his mind bids him hurry to acquire, lest some one outstrip him in the race. The minister of religion, with his solemn face and his admonishing tone, saying, "Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but labor for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life," is regarded as an unwelcome intruder.

Nevertheless, without this admonition we should sink into satisfaction with the sordid, our very successes dragging us down to deeper pits of spiritual degradation. The nobler ideals which are native to the soul would be submerged. We should live among the straw and stubble of things, and never see the stars shining above our

heads. Teachers of religion can not be too insistent in thrusting their principles upon our attention. They must lay their hands earnestly upon our shoulders and point us pressingly to the Celestial City, or we shall be swallowed up in the City of Destruction. However irritating he may be, the man who draws us away from material interests to spiritual ideals is an angel of God.

Christ's doctrine of the Bread of Life was offensive to these Jews also, because it appeared unreasonable to their carnal minds that a man of their own society should identify himself with the spiritual food which he declared was essential for their lives. When Jesus had impressed them with the thought that in the quest of life the spiritual interests of men are of paramount importance, and they had asked Him how they might work for these interests, He told them to begin by believing in Him. When they demanded some sign which should authenticate Him to their minds, He replied that the proof of His assertions would be found in the spiritual food itself. When they cried, "Lord, evermore give us this bread!" He responded, "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to Me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst." This was altogether too great a tax on their credulity. "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?" they ask. "How can He have come down from heaven? He was born in Bethlehem. He was brought up in Nazareth. He lived in Galilee until recently. He the bread of life? It is preposterous."

That is the way in which men attempt to throw off the claims of Christ upon their lives to-day. They say, "Your human Jesus can not be the ultimate source of life. It is unreasonable." They wish to get into an argument about it. But the method of Jesus is better. He will not discuss the question. He simply reaffirms the claim, "I am the bread of life. . . . This is the bread which cometh down from heaven. . . . I am the living bread." The soul that feeds on the Bread will not be

troubled by the genealogical table of Jesus. The proof that Christ is food and drink to the soul is found in partaking of Him. Not long before his death Charles Kingsley was discussing with a friend some of the profoundest doctrines of our holy religion, when he suddenly broke out with the exclamation, "I can not, can not live without this man Christ Jesus!" That is the experience of all who have gone to Him for the satisfaction of their soul-hunger.

The figure Jesus uses is unquestionably a very striking one. But He was dealing with very obtuse people, who must be shocked into some kind of moral sensibility before they could apprehend the truth. "I am the bread of life" was calculated to accomplish that result. "He that cometh to Me," "He that believeth on Me," "He that feedeth on Me," would probably wake up the dullest mind. Yet the figure is not difficult or incongruous. Are there not men who feed on Shakespeare and the poets, on Plato and the philosophers? Do we not speak of drinking in the charm of a painting, the beauty of a statue, the grandeur of an architectural pile, the sublimity of a mountain peak? Is not patriotism nourished by the lives of heroes who infect their fellows with their own sacrificial spirit? Is not patience developed in the souls of others by the gentle sufferer who influences the mood of an entire household? And do not these analogies assist us to perceive how Christ can feed the souls of men by imparting Himself to them? Have we not witnesses enough to the sustaining power of communion with God? Has not the famished one often cried out with the Psalmist, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God?" And has not the cry been heard, and the longing satisfied? Did not Jesus quote the saying of the olden time, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God?" And have not multitudes greater than that which Jesus fed by the shore of Galilee testified, "He hath prepared a table before me in the presence of mine enemies?"

Captain Allen Francis Gardiner is an impressive ex-

ample. Actuated by the devout passion to spread the Gospel among the degraded heathen of Patagonia, he landed with one or two companions on the terrible coast of Picton Island. Abandoned by the rescue party which should have come, these poor men slowly starved to death, but their faith remained strong and invincible to the end. After weeks of incredible suffering from cold and hunger, Gardiner wrote, "God has kept me in perfect peace." When the bodies of these heroes were found a month after they had perished, the sailors who had come too late to deliver them cried like children. But they found that Gardiner had painted on a rock beside the cavern where he and his comrades had taken refuge from the cold a hand pointing downwards, and beneath it the words, "My soul, wait thou only upon God." He had taken of the Bread of Heaven, and had been nourished unto eternal life.

Christ's doctrine of the Bread of Life was offensive also to these Jews because it scandalized their sense of propriety. At least this is the pretense they made. When Jesus said, "The bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world," they professed to be appalled. "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" they exclaim. Jesus simply drives the affirmation still deeper into the quick, and says, "Whoso eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed." And we may imagine these troubled disputants saying among themselves, "Suppose He is the Son of man, suppose He is the true revelation of God, suppose He is the source of life—how can we partake of His flesh and blood? The thought is abhorrent to every properly instructed Jew."

Do we also stumble at this teaching? And shall we endeavor to master the difficulty by adopting the plan which Rome has employed, and in the sacrifice of the mass say that, by the charm of a priest's words the wafer and the wine become the veritable body and blood of

Christ, which taken into the human system effect a spiritual reinvigoration? It is a species of pious cannibalism, if one believes it a genuine transaction. It is a pious fraud, if one believes it is a mere figure, and that this is all Jesus meant by His solemn and oft-repeated words. Or shall we like the Jew repudiate the teaching altogether?

Nay; Jesus has provided the key which unlocks this mystery. He has given the terms of interpretation. "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing. The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." This is a spiritual truth, and it can only be spiritually apprehended. The revelation of the Divine Father is through a human Son. The Word has been made flesh. Flesh signifies the fullness of humanity. The appropriation of that human Christ, the partaking of the virtues of His life and death, the assimilation of His divine nature, by an act of faith in Him, which is utter dependence on Him—that is what is intended by eating His flesh and drinking His blood. To consume His body would not give eternal life. Parkman tells of an Indian who fancied he could imbibe the heroic spirit of a dying Jesuit priest by drinking his blood, but no enlightened mind dreams that Christ's power to nourish the souls of men is transmitted in any such magical fashion. But the quality of His life is not the low tone of ours. His is not the defective morality that mars our characters. He is the perfection of spiritual beauty and strength. He is the Son of God. We know that if we can partake of His life we shall be like Him. Those old Jews knew well enough what He meant. They were not so devoid of poetry and moral perception as they pretended to be. But they did not favor the doctrine because they desired a Messiah who would enable them to fulfill their earthly and political aspirations. We know full well what Jesus means, and if we do not accept His teaching it is not because we can not understand it, but because it runs against our worldly tastes.

It is not enough for us to look at the Bread of Life, to comment upon the nutritiousness of this spiritual food, to acknowledge that we need it. We can do all this and

starve to death, while every consideration warns us to partake; as a child may be famishing with hunger, while he pushes his pinched face up against the window of a bake-shop, looking eagerly at the things he has not money to buy. "Think oftener of God than you breathe," said an old pagan philosopher. "Let discourse of God be renewed daily, more surely than your food." That is well, but not enough. Take God into perpetual communion with your soul through faith in Jesus Christ. Then the doctrine of the Bread of Life will not be a hard saying, but sweet and comforting beyond the choicest gifts of the world.

Bread of heaven,
Feed me till I want no more.

XVI.

JESUS AT THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES.

CHAPTER VII.

This Gospel speaks a language to which no parallel whatever is to be found in the whole compass of literature; such childlike simplicity, with such contemplative profundity; such life and such deep rest; such sadness and such severity; and above all, such a breath of love.
—*Tholuck.*

Now the Scenery is Shifted. An example of John's dramatic method. He omits much of the ministry in Galilee which is recorded in Matt. xiv—xviii, simply saying, "Jesus was walking in Galilee," and giving the reason for His absence from Judæa—the Jews were seeking to kill Him. There is thus an interval of six months of which John records nothing. He suddenly transfers Jesus to Jerusalem, where the crisis immediately becomes more acute.

I. THE CHALLENGE OF HIS BRETHREN (1-9).

The Feast of Tabernacles described.

1. **Jesus Urged by His Brethren to Attend (2-5).** Their motives probably sincere. No treachery indicated in the suggestion. Sharing the opinions of the Jews respecting the character of the Messiah, they did not believe in the claim of Jesus, but wanted the matter tested in Jerusalem, where His works would have more publicity. Their arguments are apparently sound.

2. **The Response of Jesus (6-9).** It was not opportune for Him to go yet. A hint that following their advice would precipitate conflict resulting in prema-

ture death for Him. No peril for them because they had not aroused the hatred of the world. They were in practical accord with the spirit of their times.

II. DISCOURSES AT THE FEAST (10-39).

1. **Introductory (10-13).** His appearance at the Feast, and the impression made by it. Enters somewhat clandestinely. Jews eagerly seek for Him. People divided in their gossip about Him (12). No open discussion of Him "for fear of the Jews" (13). Subservience of the people to the authorities.

2. **First Discourse (14-36).** Three groups of hearers:

(1) *The Jews Generally* (14-24). About the middle of the Feast in the Temple (14). They marvel at His literary ability (15). Jesus attributes it to God (16), whose doctrines He teaches. Gives a method of testing His doctrines (17, 18). Accuses them of being false to their own law (19). Shows them their inconsistency (20-24), and awakens their resentment.

(2) *Citizens of Jerusalem* (25-31). Their query: This is the man the rulers are trying to capture, yet He speaks openly; why do they not silence Him? Do they hesitate because they fear He may be the Christ? We know better. The Messiah will come mysteriously, not openly (25-27). The response of Jesus: You know Me well enough, but not My Father who sent Me (28, 29). Their unsated anger (30). His time was not yet come. The people are disposed to believe in Him, being doubtful whether the Messiah would do more miracles than Jesus had performed, to their knowledge (31).

(3) *The Police of the Sanhedrin* (32-36). Sent to apprehend Him (32). The puzzling declaration of Jesus about going away whither they could not reach Him (33, 34). Their unsatisfactory attempts to explain it (35, 36).

3. **Second Discourse (37-39).** The last day of the Feast. Christ's enigmatical saying. Perhaps occasioned by the libations of water made at the morning sacrifice on eacn day of the Feast (37, 38). Compare Isa. lv, 1; Rev. xxii, 17. John's interpretation of this utterance. This passage (39) an evidence that the evangelist wrote a long time after the events he recorded.

III. CONFLICTING RESULTS OF THE DISCOURSES (40-52).

1. **Impression Made Upon the Populace (40-44).** Some said, "This is the Prophet." Others, "This is the Christ." Some, "Christ can not come out of Galilee, according to the Scriptures" (40-42). A division of the people, but despite the desire of some to seize Him, no man laid hands upon Him (43, 44). Observe how the world is still, and always will be, thus divided.

2. **Impression Made Upon the Officers (45-49).** No opportunity had arisen for taking Jesus. His words had profoundly impressed the Sanhedrin police (46). Moreover, his hour had not come (30). When that should arrive there would be no difficulty. Read xiii, 27; xviii, 6; xix, 11. The rejoinder of the Pharisees (48, 49) is an appeal to the authority of precedent. The dignitaries had not believed in Jesus. The rude populace was not to be relied upon. The officers ought not to have been influenced by ignorant opinions.

3. **Divided Sentiment of the Sanhedrin (50-52).** The gentle protest of Nicodemus. Campare Gamaliel's speech. (Acts v, 34-42.) The Pharisees were condemning the people for that of which they were themselves guilty, a violation of the law. The accused was entitled to be heard. (Deut. i, 16, 17.) The Pharisees retort that Galilee is no place to look for greatness (52; 41, 42).

Hymn No. 127.

O who like Thee so humbly bore
The scorn, the scoff of men before?
So meek, so lowly, yet so high,
So glorious in humility?

—*A. Cleveland Coxe.*

Personal Questions:

1. On which side of the conflict about Jesus do I stand.
2. Have I accepted His method of proving the truth of His teachings—doing the will of God?
3. Do His words convince me that He is the Son of God?

Opinions About Jesus.

"So there was a division among the people because of Him."—JOHN vii, 43.

Not long before his death, Franz Delitzsch, the famous German exegete and Hebrew scholar, sent an account of his conversion to a religious periodical, in which these words occur: "After passing through the ordinary schools I came out a complete rationalist. I felt a drawing toward God, but the person of Jesus was for me enveloped in deep darkness. I went to the university to study philosophy and philology. Seeking for truth, I plunged into the systems of the German philosophers, of whom Fichte was especially attractive to me. A university friend, who had found Jesus and loved Him, worked incessantly to bring me to the faith. I withstood him long, but to-day I can point to the spot in the street of my native city where a beam from above placed me in the same condition as Thomas when he exclaimed, 'My Lord and my God!' I then studied theology, and mingled with Christian families, and the three years of

my university course were the sweetest of my life—the spring-time of my spiritual love."

The person of Jesus has always been "enveloped in deep darkness" for many thoughtful people; but when any soul passes through the spiritual crisis described by Delitzsch, the mystery of Christ's being no longer prevents confession of faith in His eternal deity. "What think ye of Christ?" is the question which persists wherever the Gospel is preached. The Pharisees tried to elude it when Jesus thrust it at them, and said, "He is the son of David." But He wound them up in their own snares, and sent them away discomfited. The unreasoning populace said, "We think him Elias, or John the Baptist, or Jeremias, or some other of the old prophets." Nicodemus, who interviewed Him by night, said, "Rabbi, Thou art a teacher come from God." The brutal mob which bore Him away to a prejudiced tribunal said, "We think Him worthy of death. Away with Him!" The centurion who with his soldiers stood guard around His cross, and beheld the darkness and felt the earthquake which attended His death, cried out, "Truly this man was the Son of God!" Simon Peter, with a still deeper insight, exclaimed, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of God."

There are no fresh opinions about the person of Christ. All the schools of belief and unbelief which exist to-day were operative in the years of Christ's earthly ministry, and in a general way had their representatives among those who discussed Jesus at the Feast of Tabernacles, as recorded in John's Gospel.

The people were divided then respecting His *character*. Some of them said, "He is a good man." Others said, "No, He is a deceiver." The dilemma still exists. If the claims which Jesus advanced were false, then He deceived His generation, and He can not be a good man. Say what you will about His virtues, acknowledge His miraculous powers, admit that "never man spake like this man;" yet if He foisted an imposture upon His age, He

was not a good man. There is nothing more terrible, nothing more wicked, than to deceive the people. He who lures an unsuspicious public to investments which he knows are doomed to failure, or imperils human life by structures which he knows are improperly built, receives the execration of mankind. But his guilt is light compared with the iniquity of him who betrays the faith of immortal souls by false teachings, or rears their hopes on the crumbling basis of a lie. If Jesus swerved a hair's breadth from absolute truth, He can not receive the tribute which He claims.

There is an alternative, which amazing rashness has sometimes suggested. If Christ were self-deceived, He could not be charged with dishonesty. The Jews put this suggestion into form when they said, "Thou hast a devil," by which they meant that He was beside Himself. On another occasion He had been the victim of a similar criticism because of His intense enthusiasm. Now He is taunted with madness because He has shown them that He knows they seek His life. Insanity is the only relief for the character of Jesus, if it be proven that He deceived the people. But it requires a madman to believe that Jesus had other than a faultless mind, in the face of His incomparable words. And His challenge, "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" remains unanswered to this day.

The people were divided respecting His *works*. "Look at His miracles," some say. "When Christ cometh will He do more miracles than these which this man hath done?" But others suggested that His works were probably wrought through diabolical influence. They were good works doubtless, but they proceeded from a bad source. The gross inconsistency of this assumption would make it incredible, if something like it had not appeared frequently in history. The melancholy story of witchcraft stains the pages of human annals through some of the most intelligent periods of the world's career. The wonder-worker is always in great peril. People

will kill him just because he has such extraordinary gifts. And if his life is saved, his reputation will be destroyed. The censors of public opinion will ascribe infernal motives to him, or they will empty his works of any deep significance.

Persons say in our times, "Do n't talk to me of miracles. I have seen too many to believe in them." They remember that, as intelligence increases and the processes of nature become more clearly understood, marvels are wrought by ordinary means, which a former generation would have thought impossible without supernatural interference. The evidential value of miracles is very slight to many minds. Such persons suggest the words attributed to Abraham in the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus: "If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead."

Thus people are still divided respecting Christ's works. Either these wonders were not performed, they say, or if they were actually wrought, they were not above the natural order, and in any case they mean nothing. But on every supposition as to their character they do signify a great deal. They are radiant with kindness, goodness, mercy, compassion, helpfulness. What would *you* do if you possessed supernatural power? Make money, achieve triumphs, smite your foes, and dazzle the world with your performances? But Jesus showed the sublimity of His virtue by using His power never for His own advantage, always for the profit of others.

The people were divided respecting His *office*. They said, "Perhaps this is the Messiah. At any rate the rulers permit Him to speak boldly, and say nothing to Him. Can it be that they have a feeling that this is the Christ? But this is impossible, for the Messiah will come mysteriously. As for this man, we know whence He is. His pedigree and family are familiar to us." Nevertheless, some of them said, "Of a truth this is the Prophet." Others said, "This is the Christ." Still others

retorted, "Shall Christ come out of Galilee? Hath not the Scriptures said that Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem?" Their very question betrays their ignorance of His birth and parentage.

But He claims to be the Son of God. That is something more, as He interprets it, than the Jewish mind saw in being the Messiah. When Jesus said unto them, "Before Abraham was I am," they took up stones to hurl at Him. He deserved death, in their judgment, for having arrogated to Himself the attributes of God.

Moreover, the authorities were against Jesus, and the popular will is ever deferential to the opinions of the persons who bulk large in the public eye. "No man spake openly of Him for fear of the Jews"—the influential Jerusalem party. The rulers were quite ready to follow up the advantage which came to them from the subservience of the people, and when they detected any disposition to favor Jesus they asked, "Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed on Him?" And that was a very effective thrust.

These things puzzle a good many persons yet. Is Jesus "more than man, but less than God?" as some would have us think, if reason can tolerate such a conception. Or, is He all that John evidently believed Him to be, and that the Church has been teaching He is for long centuries? Are we ready with the confession of the martyr Pionius? When the consul asked him, "Whom dost thou worship?" he replied, "I worship Him who made the earth and stars, and gave me life, and is my God." "Dost thou mean Him who was crucified?" inquired the official. "Certainly I do, Him whom the Father sent for the salvation of the world."

Jesus is not always popular with the great. The rulers and the Pharisees in some instances discredit Him. His place in the individual heart depends upon the conviction which has been formed regarding His person. "Unto you, therefore, which believe He is precious, but unto them which be disobedient . . . a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense," says Peter. Every soul

must decide for himself. "What think *ye* of Christ?" There will always be "a division of the people because of Him." It is so here and now, and it will be so hereafter. The destiny of the race will turn upon the relation of men to the character of Christ.

An artist sent one of his students to the Apollo Belvedere in Rome, as the most perfect object of its kind in the world, and said to him, "Go and study it, and if you see no great beauty in it to captivate you, study it again. Go again and again until you feel its beauty, for be assured it is there."

Jesus has provided a similar method by which any devout soul can discover the ultimate truth respecting Himself. "My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me. If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of Myself." Faith in Christ is not a triumph of the understanding, but an effect of obedience. Live in the atmosphere of His teachings, put yourself into communion with Him, order life in accordance with His precepts, and ascertain by this spiritual test whether it is possible to believe that He could be mistaken about Himself, or would undertake to deceive others.

John Stuart Mill, who was certainly not a theological partisan of evangelical Christianity, said, "That which, after all, to me would be the best and highest form of life would be to live as Jesus Christ would have approved." It is the line of proof which Jesus recommends—this conduct of life by the rule of what He pronounces good. He professes to reveal the will of God. Let a man pursue the course Jesus has marked out as the program of life. Not all at once will he see the full significance of Christ's person. But let him persevere in the test, and finally there will sweep down upon him the ineradicable conviction that He is the Christ, the Son of God.

Jean Maire was a private tutor in a family of the German nobility. He was an unbelieving rationalist, a

man of erudition and refinement, a good public speaker, but entirely destitute of personal religion. One of the neighboring ministers asked him to occupy his pulpit in his absence. He replied, "How can I preach what I do not believe?" "But you believe in God," said the pastor. "Yes, I do that," he rejoined. "And surely you believe that men should love Him?" "Doubtless," he said. "Well, then, preach on the words of Jesus, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, etc.'" He said, "I will try just to oblige you." He thought over the words, and made notes somewhat after this fashion: 1. We must love God. Reasons for this. 2. We must love Him with all our powers in very truth. Nothing less than this could satisfy God. 3. Do we thus love God? No. "Then," as he subsequently explained to his friends, "without any previously formed plan I was brought to see the need of a Savior. At that moment a new light broke upon my soul. I understood that I had not loved God, and that I required a Savior, and that Jesus was that Savior, and I loved and clung to Him at once. On the morrow I preached the sermon, and the third head was the chief, namely, the necessity of trusting to such a Savior as Jesus." An experience like that is sufficient commentary on the words of Jesus, "If any man will do His will he shall know of the doctrine."

XVII.

JESUS AND THE FALLEN WOMAN.

CHAPTER VII, 53—VIII, 1-11.

If the heart studies the Christ as portrayed in this writing, it will need no other proof of His divinity.
—*Ellicott.*

An Interruption.

As soon as the attention of the reader is drawn to it, he perceives that this incident bears no necessary relation to the matter which precedes and follows it. In fact, it would be natural to join the 12th verse of Chapter VIII immediately to the 52d verse of Chapter VII. The insertion of this story interrupts the discourse of Jesus at the Feast of the Tabernacles without any apparent cause. The manner in which it is introduced, and the abrupt fashion in which, at its termination, the address of Jesus is resumed, show the awkwardness of its position here. In fact, some of the MSS. which contain it place it at the end of the Gospel, and one inserts it after vii, 36, where it certainly could be better accommodated than here.

These considerations raise the question—Does it really belong to the Gospel of John at all? The scholars are practically unanimous in saying that it does not. It is omitted by all the oldest Greek MSS. with a single exception. It differs from John's other writings both in vocabulary and structure. His customary expressions are not found in it. On the other hand, much of its language is foreign to his literary habit. The tone of the narrative is unlike his writings.

But while the story does not appear to belong to

John's Gospel, there is strong evidence that it is "an authentic fragment of Apostolic tradition." It is similar in style to the writings of the Synoptists, and several MSS. place it after Luke xxi, where it seems more appropriate. It evidently belongs to the period of the last visit to Jerusalem. It may well be regarded as a genuine part of the Gospel history. It reflects the true spirit of Christ. It may have been written on the margin of one copy of John's Gospel, and thence transferred to other MSS., and so passed into the received text. Papias, who flourished in the second century, preserves a narrative very similar to this. The origin of this story can not be located, and as the readings of the MSS. are exceedingly various, several hands may have wrought upon it. Yet it is an independent story, and not a variation of some other incident in the life of Jesus.

I. JESUS AND THE ACCUSERS (3-9).

Here is a plot to ruin Jesus, and this may account for its insertion at this point in John's Gospel. It is an illustration of the spirit with which the Jewish rulers are seeking the destruction of Christ. The diabolical meanness of it is shown by the method they employ. Jesus is no sooner seated among the people who have gathered to hear His teachings than the Scribes and Pharisees bring the poor creature into His presence who has already been under their inquisition. A low state of public morals is revealed by the fact that they dared conduct such a trial on the open streets of Jerusalem. They exhibit brutal indelicacy toward the woman by thus exposing her to shame. They might have referred her case to Christ without bringing her to Him. But their motive is not the conviction of this culprit, but the ruin of Jesus, and they will scruple at no baseness to accomplish it.

They propose a dilemma which they fancy He can not escape. "Moses in the law commanded us that such should be stoned, but what sayest Thou?" If He confirmed the Mosaic penalty He could be accused before

Pilate of violating Roman authority, which reserved to itself the right of pronouncing the death sentence. If He charged them to dismiss the woman or to abate the penalty, they could accuse Him before the Sanhedrin and discredit Him before the people as a false Messiah.

The Master first meets the contemptible trick, which resembles in a way the question about tribute money (Luke xx, 20-26), by perfect silence. He stoops and writes upon the pavement. It is the quiet rebuke of an innocent man. It is not certain that He wrote anything legible. His act may have been like that of any person who, in a moment of agitation, traces lines in the dust while reflecting on the situation. It has been suggested that He wrote on the ground to remind these false-hearted accusers of the tables of the law written with the finger of God. It has been fancied that He was recording the sins of those who were present. Perhaps, as Godet suggests, He wrote what He finally spoke, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her," the first part being traced when He first lowered His head, and the second when after speaking He resumed His stooping posture. Plummer says, "They were hoping that He would explain away the seventh commandment, in order that they themselves might break the sixth." Christ's solution of the dilemma they proposed for His undoing struck home to these guilty men. It need not be supposed that Jesus intended to imply that each person present had been actually guilty of the same sin, but that each one would realize that he was potentially guilty, and many of them would know that by inclination, and judged by the higher law which Christ announced in the Sermon on the Mount, they were guilty in heart. By His challenge Jesus lifted the case out of the judicial domain to the moral ground, from the legal to the spiritual plane. He shows that there is a tribunal of the soul more exacting, though more tender, than that of any human court. The meaning of Christ's words is more fully understood by comparing Matt. vii, 1-5, and Rom. xiv, 4.

II. JESUS AND THE ACCUSED (10, 11).

The Lord waits long enough for the accusers to slip away before He pays attention to the poor creature awaiting her sentence. Conscience has made cowards of all of them. They have gladly escaped the searching glance of the sinless man. Then Jesus lifts His eyes, and seeing the woman standing alone, asks, "Woman, where are those thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee?" "No man, sir," she replies. The one man who because of His perfect purity has the right to stone her, on the broad principle of judgment He has announced, is before her. What will He do? It is an impressive moment. Two persons are alone, the compassionate Christ and the crestfallen sinner. "Neither do I condemn thee," Jesus exclaims. He came not to judge, but to save. Nevertheless, there is condemnation, not of the sinner, but of the sin. "Go, and sin no more." No words of forgiveness are spoken. They have not been asked. No word of peace is pronounced. He alone knows whether the woman is penitent or not, but He gives no sign of His knowledge. Yet He has hope of the sinner. He expects better things of her. He will send her out with hope in her own soul and with an inspiration to be true. Some of the Fathers thought this incident likely to be interpreted to the peril of those who would use it as an apology for lax morality. It is really one of the strongest warnings against the sin of unchastity in the whole Bible, while it teaches at the same time the sweetest charity.

Hymn No. 697.

Rescue the perishing,
Care for the dying,
Snatch them in pity from sin and the grave;
Weep o'er the erring one,
Lift up the fallen,
Tell them of Jesus the mighty to save.

Down in the human heart,
Crushed by the tempter,
Feelings lie buried that grace can restore:
Touched by a loving heart,
Wakened by kindness,
Chords that were broken will vibrate once more.
—*Fanny J. Crosby.*

Personal Questions:

1. Have I learned Christ's compassion for the sinner?
2. Am I willing to be judged by the judgment I apply to others?

The Compassionate Christ.

Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.
—JOHN viii, 11.

"From thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead"—so we repeat in the Apostles' Creed, and the declaration is well phrased, for He would not pronounce judgment while He was among men. Often He was besought to do so, but He refrained Himself from it, saying, "I came not to judge the world, but to save the world." Once He was asked to adjust a quarrel about an inheritance, but He said, "Man, who made Me a judge or a divider over you?" Once He was asked to determine whether a pious Jew ought to pay the Roman tax, and He said, "Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things which are God's." That He would appoint unto men their final judgment He did not disavow, and He announced the basis on which He would do it. But that would occur after He had been glorified and the nations were gathered before Him. For the present life of humanity He had no judgment to pronounce. "God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." When, therefore, the Scribes and

Pharisees brought to Him a woman who had been proven guilty of that one sin which society will not condone in her sex, but which with rank injustice it views complacently in the other sex, He refused to render judicial sentence. With marvelous sagacity He said, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." That was a sword thrust which found her accusers at their very hearts, and noiselessly they slipped out of the extemporized court, leaving the woman and the compassionate One face to face alone. "Woman, where are those thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee?" Jesus asks. "No man, Lord," she replies. "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more." Thus the Master gave compassion, and not condemnation.

The compassion of Jesus was an evidence of His quick intelligence, and if His modern disciples only knew more, they too would be more compassionate. He understood the motive and the character of these accusers. He knew that they had no such abhorrence for the sin of this woman as they tried to make apparent. He knew that they had no such scrupulous regard for the Mosaic law as they professed, for the period was peculiarly lax in Jewish as well as Roman society. He knew, moreover, that in their hearts they were in many instances as culpable as the woman whom they sought to punish. Above all, He knew that their supreme purpose was to entangle Him in a dilemma from which He could not extricate Himself without on the one hand showing a clemency which would injure His reputation for righteousness, or on the other hand exercising a prerogative which the Roman law jealously guarded as its own.

Dante represents himself in his immortal epic as having his forehead incised by the angel's sword with seven P's—*peccata*—signifying the seven mortal sins which must be purged away, not because he had in every instance been actually guilty of these deadly iniquities, but because in himself he recognized the potentialities of

them all; as Goethe said, "I have never heard of a crime which I might not have committed." These accusers of the fallen woman, when confronted with the challenge to stone her if they found no similar evil in their own lives, confessed judgment instantly, and withdrew in silence. Jesus knew them perfectly.

He knew this woman as well. The circumstances of her life were all before Him. He knew the curse of her comradeship with bad men, who were infinitely more guilty of her sin than was she who had become the victim of their seductive blandishments. He knew the deep shame of her soul, the sharp darts of conscience which were piercing her heart. He knew the honest penitence which was welling up in her bosom, and He saw the tear-drop which agony and despair were forcing from her eyelids. He saw in her the image of God, for though the sun of virtue was nearly extinguished by the heavy clouds of her revolting life, yet the light faintly struggled to show itself. She was still a woman with the incalculable possibilities for good which are in every woman, however degraded she may have become. As St. Bernard has well said, "The divine image in man can be burned, but it can not be burned out."

That there were extenuating circumstances in her case, who can doubt? Was there ever such a sinner, for whom nothing could be said in apology? If we knew the inner life in its entirety, could we not find some little vestige of an excuse for a sin that often springs from an abuse of holy affection? The exhortation of Burns is justified:

> Then gently scan your brother man,
> Still gentler sister woman;
> Though they may gang a kennin wrang,
> To step aside is human.
> One point must still be greatly dark,
> The moving why they do it;
> And just as lamely can ye mark
> How far perhaps they rue it.

Who made the heart, 't is He alone
Decidedly can try us;
He knows each chord—its various tone,
Each spring—its various bias.
Then at the balance let 's be mute,
We never can adjust it;
What 's done we partly may compute,
But know not what 's resisted.

The compassion of Jesus was an evidence of His exalted character. He who could say, "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" refused to condemn this poor culprit. The noblest persons are ever the most compassionate with sinners. Those who are deficient in righteousness are usually the least charitable. The defaulting servant in the parable, who has been pardoned for a debt of a hundred pounds, is quite ready to hound to prison the man who owes him but fifty. He who has a beam in his own eye is most eager to remove the mote in his neighbor's eye. The censorious are often the most censurable. In every case they are lacking in the higher qualities of a godly life. For religion does not consist merely in what we call exact justice. Shylock was technically just, according to the terms of his bond, but miserably wicked according to the standards of the better morality. Lycurgus was just enough with his precise legislation for all the crimes in the calendar. Aristides was so just that his name became offensive to one of the noblest Athenians. God, who is goodness personified, is more than just. "His mercy endureth forever." There are righteous people whose hatred of sin is only equaled by their love for sinners. They attain the divine likeness.

The best Christians are those who feel the deepest repugnance for evil, conjoined with the sweetest compassion for evil-doers. John wrote his tender gospel from Ephesus, one of the most notoriously wicked cities of antiquity. No man in that dissolute metropolis witnessed its foulness with greater horror. Its temple of

Diana, housing hundreds of courtesans, and sanctioning the vilest lasciviousness, filled no pious soul with a deadlier loathing than he experienced. No man wrote more scathingly of sin than did he. Yet no preacher was more compassionate. No soul could reason more lovingly with the erring than did he. When Paul beheld Athens given up to idolatry, "his spirit was stirred in him," the record declares. The phrase is too mild. On the strength of the original language we are justified in saying that Paul suffered a paroxysm of distress. Yet observe how graciously he addresses the Athenians on Mars' Hill, and how gently and adroitly he undertakes to win them away from their pagan abuses. No man in Jerusalem could feel the abhorrence which Jesus had for the sins of His people. Yet when He denounced them He framed a lament that sounds its *miserere* over the long centuries. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"

We may be sure that in this instance Jesus saw, as no other soul could, the vast abyss which yawned between what this woman might have been and what she had actually become. The loathsome character of her sin drove Him to momentary confusion and inexpressible disgust. Yet He was waiting to forgive her, while He struggled with the agony of a pure soul brought into sudden and unhappy contact with iniquity.

History tells us that Avidius Cassius, one of the most trusted generals of Marcus Aurelius, revolted against the Emperor, and drew after him a great army of soldiers. But when he had been nominal sovereign for only three months and six days, he was slain by some of his officers. His head was sent to the Emperor, but Marcus Aurelius held out no promise of reward to the assassin, for he regretted that his enemy had not lived long enough to afford him the luxury of a sincere forgiveness. When the correspondence of Cassius was brought to him, he consigned it to the flames unread.

This was like the act of Jesus, who standing before that fallen woman, found His divine delight not in pronouncing sentence upon her, but in proffering pity and encouragement. "Woman, where are those thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee? Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more."

The compassion of Jesus is characteristic of His mission in the world. He came to seek and to save that which was lost. "Go, and sin no more" reveals the method of His work of redemption. Condemnation enough fell upon this sinner's sin. She could never escape the consequences of her fall. The universe is built on moral principles. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." The law is inexorable. God's regulations suffer no amendment. It is the good fortune of the world that this is so. What more dreadful calamity could there be than a universe conducted on caprice? God is precise.

"For the world was built in order,
And the atoms march in tune."

The astronomer has never any need to publish a bulletin announcing that a planet is behind time in its swing through its unbroken orbit. The chemist never has cause to declare that the proportions in which the elements will combine have been changed. This rectitude pervades the moral universe. Sin is lawlessness, and lawlessness hurls to ruin.

But no soul was ever saved in this fashion, for we have all sinned and come short of the glory of God. The law destroys the law-breaker, and Jesus came not to destroy life, but to save it. His method is forgiveness. As a means of recovering humanity from sin this is novel. The method of nature is suffering. The method of law is penalty. The method of Christ is grace. And this method is effective. Forgiving men their sins is the divine way of withdrawing them from their sins.

Jean Valjean, the former convict in Victor Hugo's "Les Miserables," is taken into the good bishop's house, given his supper and a warm bed and made as welcome as though he were a prince. But the propensities of a life, hardened by contact with vicious men and embittered by the sense of unjust treatment, stifle the good spirit in the man, and before dawn he rises from his bed and carries off with him the bishop's plate which had adorned the table at supper. He is soon apprehended by the gendarmes and brought back to the episcopal residence, where the good bishop, recognizing the man's temptation and desiring to protect him, leaves the impression on the officers that he gave the plate to Jean Valjean, and asks why he did not take the silver candlesticks, which were also a present to him. The gendarmes on this release the man, and the bishop exclaims, "Jean Valjean, my brother, you no longer belong to evil, but to good. I have bought your soul of you. I withdraw it from black thoughts and the spirit of perdition, and give it to God." This was the undoubted purpose of Jesus with the fallen woman. By His compassionate treatment of her guilty soul He expected to prompt her to a life of purity. "Hath no man condemned thee? Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more."

Such a method is calculated to be effective in restoring men to virtue, by leading them to repentance and amendment, if there be any vestige of conscience in them. Do you wish to get the most out of men? Do not punish them, but pardon them; do not curse them, but bless them; do not exact the payment of an obligation from them, but put them under greater obligation.

William Scott was a soldier lad from a Vermont farm. He fell asleep at his post. He had great provocation, for he had been without any rest for forty-eight hours. The army was at Chain Bridge, the neighborhood was dangerous, and discipline must be kept. A court-martial sentenced the man to be shot. Then the kind offices of Abraham Lincoln were sought. The day preceding the proposed execution the great-hearted President appeared at the tent of William Scott, and asked

him many questions about himself, his family and his circumstances. Finally he said: "My boy, stand up here and look me in the face. You are not going to be shot to-morrow. I believe you when you tell me that you could not keep awake. I am going to trust you and send you back to your regiment. But I have been put to a good deal of trouble on your account. I have had to come up here from Washington, when I have a great deal to do; and what I want to know is, how are you going to pay my bill?" With his heart welling up in his throat, William Scott expressed his gratitude in the best terms his embarrassment would permit. He said that he had not thought the matter out, it had come upon him so suddenly, but there was his bounty in the savings bank, and some money he thought could be raised by mortgaging the farm at home. His own pay was something, and he believed the boys of his regiment would help him a little on pay-day. Altogether it seemed probable to him that five or six hundred dollars could be made up, if that would be sufficient. "But the bill is a great deal more than that," said Mr. Lincoln. Then the condemned man replied that, though he did not quite see his way clear to do it, he would—if he lived—find some plan for paying the great debt. Then the President put his hands on the shoulders of William Scott, and looked into his face and said: "My boy, my bill is a very large one. Your friends can not pay it, nor your bounty, nor the farm, nor all your comrades. There is only one man in all the world who can pay it, and his name is William Scott. If from this day William Scott does his duty, so that if I should be present when he came to die, he could look me in the face as he does now, and say, I have kept my promise, and I have done my duty as a soldier, then my debt will be paid. Will you make that promise, and try to keep it?" The promise was given, and it was kept nobly. In one of the fights in the Peninsula William Scott fell wounded to the death, and said to his comrades: "If any of you ever have the chance, I wish you would tell President Lincoln that I have never forgotten the kind words he said to me at

Chain Bridge, and now that I am dying, I want to thank him again because he gave me the chance to fall like a soldier in battle, and not like a coward by the hands of my comrades." Well could Secretary Stanton say of Lincoln as he gazed upon the face of the stricken President: "There lies the most perfect ruler of men who ever lived." Lincoln saved a life to the nation by his compassion, and that life was freely poured out for the nation when the opportunity for sacrifice presented itself.

That was Christ's way of redeeming the lost. He came not to judge, not to condemn, but to pity, to love, to forgive, to win the erring to righteousness. It is the way society must learn to employ in its treatment of the depraved and dangerous classes. No punishment must be considered adequate which is not remedial in its object. The meting out of vengeance, the protection of society, the appeal to fear as a deterrent—these have no sufficient justification until they are permeated with a divine purpose to recover the sinner and the criminal from his frightful ills. Love will teach us how this is to be done.

Leschetiszky, the famous teacher of Paderewski, will never be satisfied until a pupil has expressed all the sentiment, color, warmth, vigor, and fire of his nature in his execution. He will say: "Your fingers run over the keys and say nothing. They are like icicles. Fill them with love, with sympathy!" What blunderers we are in our attempts to redeem society from the ills which vex it, until our natures have been suffused with the love of Christ, and our work has been charged with His divine compassion!

XVIII.

THE WITNESS OF JESUS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

CHAPTER VIII. 12-59.

John's Gospel shows us how deep a sense Jesus had of being a stranger on the earth.—*Beyschlag.*

CONTINUATION of the discussions at the Feast of Tabernacles. (Chap. VII.) An interval of perhaps a few hours. The officers of the Sanhedrin having made their report, and Jesus having remained untouched, He now resumes His discourse, which takes more distinctly the form of a defense, and issues in His utter rejection by the hostile Jews. The cumulative progress of Jewish enmity is seen in the course of these discussions, beginning in Chapters V and VI, where Jesus proceeds almost without interruption. In Chapter VII He is more frequently challenged, and in Chapter VIII He is stoutly resisted and contradicted at every point. In this witness concerning Himself, Jesus pursues three lines of expression.

I. HE BEARS TESTIMONY TO HIS OWN CHARACTER (12-20).

1. **The Light of the World (12).** Had already used one of the miracles of the Old Testament, the water from the rock in the desert, suggested perhaps by the libations in connection with the Feast of Tabernacles (vii, 37-39); now employs a second, the pillar of fire, suggested possibly by the candelabra of the Temple. Both are symbolical of Himself. The figure of light elsewhere used by John absolutely as an expression of God's essential being (1 John i, 5).

The light of the world is a larger conception of Christ's mission than even His disciples at first gained. Following Him, like following the pillar of fire, would bring illumination to the path of the pilgrim. Light of life signifies light that issues from and proceeds to life.

2. **The Testimony Repudiated (13).** It is personal, therefore unreliable, retort the Jews. Point not well taken. He knows Himself. Light proves its reality and character by shining. Christ attests Himself by His person and work. He is conscious of Himself.

3. **Rejection of this Testimony a Proof of Spiritual Dullness (14, 15).** They do not realize whence He came. Their judgment is wholly carnal, hence imperfect.

4. **Concurrence of the Father's Testimony (16-18).** A twofold witnessing should be satisfactory to any Jew who knows the law. Christ is one infallible witness, and the Father, who has testified in the Scriptures, in the voice from heaven and in the consciences of men, is another.

5. **Impossibility of Knowing the Father Without Knowing Christ (19).** The case is hopeless. They have no spiritual susceptibilty qualifying them to understand Him. Yet He is not silenced, though He continues to teach within hearing of His foes, for the time of His supreme sacrifice has not yet appeared (20).

II. HE EMPHASIZES THE SIGNIFICANCE OF HIS MISSION (21-30).

1. **Momentous Issues of His Earthly Life (21).** His sojourn is brief. He must soon leave them. Whither He goes they can not come, because they will not believe in Him. Their sin makes His mission to them fruitless.

2. **The Sneer of Unbelief (22).** The Jews affirm that if Jesus is going to destroy Himself, the only way of departure which in their judgment is not equally open to them, surely they can not follow Him, for suicide is the same as murder.

3. **Spiritual Distinctions (23).** The difference in character, habits, thought, sphere of living, in Jesus and these Jews made an infinite abyss between them. Nothing but transforming faith in Him will ever effect a harmony between them and Him, and this it is altogether unlikely they will ever experience (24).

4. **A Plainer Revelation at Present Impossible (25-27).** They have not spiritual discernment enough even to apprehend what has been given. The very questions they ask indicate this. When He speaks of the Father they utterly miss His meaning.

5. **The Fuller Revelation by His Death (28, 29).** When they have crucified the Lord, His glory will be more apparent, and they will perceive that He has been doing only the Father's will.

6. **Results of This Address (30).** Impressed with the words of Jesus, and convinced of the importance of His mission, some cast themselves upon Him, forsaking their own narrow views, and awaiting His further disclosures.

III. HE EXPOSES THE INFIDELITY OF HIS CRITICS (31-59).

Jesus now applies a test to the faith of those Jews who yield assent to His claims, and proves its weakness.

1. **Their Slavery (31-36).** They profess to be free, having liberty as a birthright, but Jesus shows them that spiritually they are enslaved.

2. **Their Disloyalty (37-40).** They affirm that they are the true offspring of the father of the faithful, but Jesus says, "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham."

3. **Their Iniquity (41-47).** Professing to be the children of God, they show themselves to be the children of the devil by their murderous intentions.

4. **Their Ignorance (48-58).** Assuming that they are wise, they betray their lack of knowledge by protesting that Jesus dishonors Abraham in claiming power which He could not have.

5. **Their Brutality (59).** Seeing now that Jesus presents Himself not only as the Messiah, but as Deity, and having no sufficient answer to His claims, they attempt to stone Him to death.

Hymn No. 304.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
"I am this dark world's light;
Look unto Me, thy morn shall rise,
And all thy day be bright!"
—*Horatius Bonar.*

Personal Questions:

1. Do I realize that it is the function of the Light to reveal as well as to illumine?

2. Have I sought the sinless Christ for the salvation of my sinful soul?

3. Has the Light shone through me upon others?

The Light of the World.

"I am the light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."—JOHN viii, 12.

No thoughtful person could meet these words for the first time in mature life without being profoundly moved by them. They express an egotism of such sublimity

that they arrest attention instantly, and provoke an intense interest in the man who uttered them. Jesus is defending Himself against the misrepresentations of His enemies, and He does so by opposing His own character to their willful unbelief. He virtually says to them, "My defense is Myself!" The Pharisees are offended at this, and they seek to discredit His testimony because it is so personal. "Thou bearest record of Thyself; Thy record is not true." But Jesus declares the objection cheap and groundless. "Though I bear record of Myself, yet My record is true; for I know whence I come and whither I go, but ye can not tell whence I come and whither I go." Jesus is aware of Himself. He is conscious of His own superlative worth. That kind of self-knowledge always characterizes the effective person.

William Pitt said in an hour when Englishmen were despondent over their national decline, "I am sure that I can save this country, and that nobody else can." That was at a time when Lord Chesterfield was moved to write, "We are no longer a nation." But no sooner had Pitt assumed control of the government than a happy change in the fortunes of England was observable. Frederick the Great said, "England has long been in labor, and at last she has brought forth a man." Qualified to inspire other men with the bravery that distinguished his own actions, Pitt became at once the master statesman of his age, and "for the next four years this imposing figure towers supreme in British history." Jesus said, "I can save this world, and no one else can. I am the light of the world." He appealed to the witness of the Father as given in the Scriptures, as pronounced by the voice from heaven, as expressed in His miracles, and as recorded in the consciences of men who listened to His words.

He might have appealed also to the history which would be made through His influence in the ages to come. Most distinctly does the record of the last nineteen centuries justify His self-assertiveness. Lord Bacon inserted this sentence in his last will and testament: "My name and memory I leave to foreign nations, and to

mine own countrymen after some years." Jesus could have safely rested His claims on the verdict of the future. He has amply proven Himself to be the light of the world.

If Jesus had asserted that He exclusively could throw light on every question which pertains to the life of the world, it would not have been so easy to vindicate Him. For while there is no department of human thought and activity which His mind does not illumine when brought into relation with it, yet He has offered no direct contribution to physical science, to art and music, and to the specific problems which are peculiar to modern society. He knew that men would meet these things in due time with the courage of those who relish labor, and would find joy in the process of their conquest. But into the darkness of the spiritual world, where lurk problems which no man can solve alone, He would throw the only light which can scatter the night of sin and selfishness. He is "the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

Other attempts there have been to illuminate the world, but they have served the rather to accentuate its darkness. Plato affords us the most impressive example, but of him the author of *Ecce Deus* has incisively written that he gives "one the idea that he undertook to do the work of a domestic gas-fitter. . . . He is so minute as to place a lamp at the corner of every street, at the entrance of every house, and in every room of every habitation. . . . Plato lighted his age with gas, Christ lighted the world with the sun; the one was local, the other universal; the one changeable, the other permanent. The heathen philosophers gave directions, Christ gave life."

Thomas Carlyle, commenting in his brusque fashion on Holman Hunt's painting of Christ as the Light of the World, a picture with which most persons are familiar through manifold prints, exclaims, "You call that thing, I ween, a picture of Jesus Christ. It is a poor mis-shaped presentation of the noblest, the brotherliest,

and the most heroic-minded Being that ever walked God's earth. Do you suppose that Jesus ever walked about bedizened in priestly robes and a crown, and with yon jewels on His breast, and a gilt aureole round His head? Ne'er crown nor pontifical robe did the world e'er give to such as He." Furthermore Jesus does not hold a lantern *before* the world. He shines *in* the world. Wherever He moves darkness vanishes. His glory consists in no outward circumstance, but in inward character. He can not receive honor from men, he can not refrain from bestowing light upon men. He is light in Himself. As the cloudy pillar which led the Israelites through the wilderness was not made luminous by some reflection, but burned with its own glowing fire, so Jesus pours forth His own self in tides of holy radiancy to illumine the world. And it is by entering into the life of Christ with loving sympathy and devout faith that we walk not in darkness, but have the light of life.

The only furnishings which Epictetus placed in his humble cottage were a cheap straw pallet on which he slept, and a simple lamp which served to cheer him at night, and which burned before the images of his household deities. It was constructed of iron, and was the nearest approach to luxury the poor philosopher had allowed himself. A thief stole it, and Epictetus quietly said, "He will be finely disappointed when he comes again, for he will only find an earthenware lamp next time." When he died the little earthenware lamp was bought by some hero-worshiper for three thousand drachmas. The satirist Lucian remarked upon this, "The purchaser hoped that if he read philosophy at night by that lamp, he would at once acquire in dreams the wisdom of the admirable old man who once possessed it."

With a similar fatuity sentimental persons fancy that by merely basking in the presence of Christ they can attain the holiest life. But the words of Jesus are explicit: "He that followeth Me . . . shall have the light of life." The meaning of "followeth" is not obscure. No one ever follows Christ who does not give himself up to the Lord of glory, who does not yield his will to the

will of the Master. No amount of study about Christ can ever compensate for actual fellowship with Christ.

The birds of the air instinctively follow the light of their life. Nearly all of them, as Michelet says, "live in the sun, fill themselves with it, or are inspired by it. Those of the south carry its reflected radiance on their wings; those of colder climates in their songs; many of them follow it from land to land." This is a parable of the spiritual life. The divine instincts of the soul prompt all who love the truth to seek perpetual communion with Christ.

"So late as the year 1842," says Alfred Russel Wallace, "the French mathematician and philosopher Comte declared that all study of the fixed stars was a waste of time, because their distance was so great that we could never learn anything about them." But that was before the application of spectrum analysis to the problems involved. With the use of the spectroscope the distant worlds have been brought into the very hands of the investigator. More than this, "it has been possible," as Carl Snyder says, "to detect, locate, map, measure, and even weigh vast objects that affect no human sense. Of all the triumphs of the scientific method, there is none more striking."

The philosophers of the world have often affirmed that God must forever remain unknown and unknowable, and that to search for Him would always be a bootless task. But with the coming of Jesus Christ among men the revelation of God has been focused to our earthly vision. "This, then, is the message which we have heard of Him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all," writes the apostle John. "I am the light of the world," announces Jesus. Those who behold Him with open eyes joyously assert the identification is complete. "Before Abraham was I am," says Jesus. "All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made," writes John. Before the words, "Let there be light!" rang over

the primeval chaos, He who is Light had been shining from eternity. The smoking torches, the smoldering fires, the trembling luminaries that man has set in his sky will one day disappear in unfathomable night. But the Light of the World will flood the universe forever.

What wonders have been disclosed in the properties of that matter which is called radium, with its power to go on gleaming with a pale phosphorescent light, it would seem indefinitely. It has been estimated that a microscopic speck of this marvelous substance "is capable of sending out a stream of fiery particles for thirty thousand years." A radium electroscope has been invented which is calculated to continue automatically ringing a bell for that period of time. Under the microscope, within a cylinder from which all other light is excluded, the eye sees a miniature universe flashing with tiny stars, which pour forth their scintillations with unwearying rapidity. Yet no scientist is rash enough to contend that these points of light will not some time fade into invisibility.

But the Light of the World is absolutely inexhaustible. Calculations concerning His energy are beyond the range of thought. From everlasting to everlasting He is God. The development of processes for turning night into day has made a fascinating chapter in the history of civilization. Nor has the end of achievement in this direction yet been attained. The function of culture in enlightening society has been of high consequence, and the intellectual life of the world will reach still loftier summits through the ministry of education. But the moral and spiritual hope of humanity centers in Him who called Himself the "Light of the World."

Eternity will reveal no other source of illumination. John saw the celestial world in vision too wonderful for human words to describe, and too sublime for human thought to comprehend. Out of that apocalypse we read, "The city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it."

XIX.

HEALING OF THE MAN BORN BLIND.

CHAPTER IX.

This is the unique, tender, genuine chief Gospel. . . Should a tyrant succeed in destroying the Holy Scriptures, and only a single copy of the Epistle to the Romans and the Gospel according to John escape him, Christianity would be saved.—*Luther.*

THIS is one of the best examples of John's favorite method of exhibiting side by side the development of belief and unbelief. Here the Pharisees are represented as becoming more determined and malicious in their enmity to Jesus, while the blind man is seen steadily growing in confidence and clearness of faith until he openly confesses his trust in the Son of God. The chapter divides naturally into (1) the Sign, (2) the Inquisition, (3) the Issue.

I. THE SIGN (1-12.)

1. **Prelude to the Sign (1-5).** Descending the Temple steps, Jesus is confronted by the blind beggar. Problem suggested by the fact of his having been born blind. Is any one's sin involved in this misfortune? The same problem considered in the book of Job. Question as old as human suffering. The negative of Jesus. Calamity not a certain mark of sin. Great sinners often suffer least, great saints most. Surely no sin of this man could be responsible for his misfortune; he was born blind. The sin of parents visited upon their children—a fact of observation—will not account for this case, Jesus declares. "That

the works of God should be made manifest in Him." Christ's opportunity. "The light of the world." A spiritual interpretation in anticipation of the sign.

2. **The Sign Given (6, 7).** Means used. A test of faith. The probable sensations of the man. Jesus selects a common remedy—both spittle and clay being regarded as helpful in such cases—and imparts a power not contained in either. "It is easier to believe when means can be perceived; it is still easier when the means seem to be appropriate." (*Plummer.*) The washing in Siloam brings sight.

3. **The Effect of the Sign (8-12).** Astonishment of the witnesses. Curiosity to know: (1) Is this actually the man born blind? (2) How was the wonder of his healing accomplished? (3) Where is the man who did it? Answers to these questions.

II. THE INQUISITION (13-34).

Friends and neighbors bring the man to the Pharisees, not before the Sanhedrin, but probably to one of the lesser synagogue councils.

1. **The Man's First Examination (13-17).** The miracle had been wrought on the Sabbath day. Other Sabbath miracles: Withered hand (Matt. xii, 9), Demoniac at Capernaum (Mark i, 21), Simon's mother-in-law (Mark i, 29), Woman bowed down eighteen years (Luke xiii, 11), Man with dropsy (Luke xiv, 2), Paralytic at Bethesda (John v, 1-10). Three questions are put to the man: (1) How did you receive your sight? Man repeats the story briefly. (2) How could a Sabbath-breaker perform such a miracle? The man does not answer, and the inquisitors are divided among themselves by this question. (3) What sort of character do you say He is? "A prophet," is the ready answer.

2. **An Examination of the Parents (18-23).** Pharisees go back to the fact of the miracle which they profess not to believe occurred. Three questions are

put to them: (1) Is this your son? (2) Was he born blind? (3) How does he now see? The replies of the parents show timidity. They fear excommunication. Throw the inquiry back upon the son, whom they claim as their own, and who they assert was certainly born blind. "He is of age; ask him; he shall speak for himself." Distinguish forms of excommunication.

3. **The Man's Final Examination and Expulsion (24-34).** The Pharisees resort to a pious trick. Let God be praised, but let this man who breaks the Sabbath be condemned. The man's certainty of the miracle, despite his uncertainty of the miracle-worker's character. Request for another recital of the manner of the miracle. The man's ironical response. Perhaps his inquisitors are ready to be won over to discipleship by the repetition of the tale. Abuse substituted for argument. They revile the man. His sturdy defense and growing confidence in Jesus. The man's ultimatum, and the discomfiture of the Pharisees. An explosion of impotent wrath. The man's expulsion an illustration of the words of Jesus (Luke vi, 22).

III. THE ISSUE (35-41).

1. **In the Case of the Man (35-38).** Spiritual sight. Jesus finds the expelled man, and asks if he is ready to believe on the Son of God. He answers that he is whenever he can discover Him. Jesus reveals Himself as the object of his quest, and the man pays Him divine honors. Thus, as to the outcast Samaritan woman, so to the expelled Jew, Jesus reveals Himself more clearly than He had yet done to His own disciples.

2. **In the Case of the Pharisees (39-41).** Spiritual blindness. The judgment of Christ's mission. The blind see, the seeing become blind. Those who know they are blind, and desire their sight, find it in Christ. Those who fancy they see, and reject the

help of the sight-giver, fall into blindness. Such pass sentence on themselves. Because they do see enough to bring them salvation, and refuse the light they have, sin remains with them. If they were actually ignorant they would not be held guilty.

Hymn No. 312.

O happy day, that fixed my choice
On Thee, my Savior and my God!
Well may this glowing heart rejoice,
And tell its raptures all abroad.
—*Philip Doddridge.*

Personal Questions:

1. Have I the blind man's reason for believing in Christ?
2. Have I Christ's reason for Christian service?
3. Is Christ my sufficient light?

The Ground of Certitude.

"One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see."—JOHN ix, 25.

Justin Martyr was thrown into prison for his bold proclamation of faith in Christ. When the Stoic minister of the Emperor Aurelius jocosely asked him, "Do you imagine that after your head is cut off you will go straight to heaven?" Justin replied, "Imagine it? I know it." The ground of this confidence was the consciousness of spiritual fellowship with Christ. When Ignatius of Antioch was brought before the emperor Trajan for the crime of being a Christian, he gave his name as Theophorus. "And who is Theophorus?" asked the monarch. "He who carries Christ in his heart," was the reply. "Do you speak of him who was crucified under Pontius Pilate?" asked Trajan. "I speak of Him who

bore my sins on the cross," said Ignatius. "Do you then bear the crucified within yourself?" he was asked. "I do," said he, "for it is written, 'I will dwell in them.'" This is what Chalmers used to call the portable evidence of Christianity. It rests on as good philosophic basis as any other testimony of the consciousness. Said Emanuel Kant, "My belief in God and in another world is so interwoven with my moral nature, that I am under as little apprehension of having the former torn from me as of losing the latter." When Samuel Johnson was discussing the doctrine of necessity with Boswell one day, he said, "Sir, we know that our will is free, and there 's an end on 't." John says, "He that believeth on the Son of God has the witness in himself." There is no better proof of Christianity than this. It is the spiritual counterpart of the blind man's physical experience, "One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see."

Very much of our knowledge we are compelled to take at second hand, and we never dream of protesting that this is an unreasonable requirement. You have never worked out a table of logarithms. The mathematicians have done that for you, and if you have knowledge enough to use the results of their labor, you do so without calling in question their accuracy. You have never ascertained the specific gravity of all the substances in the world. The physicists have done that for you, and you take their work on trust and are grateful for it. You have not visited the coral islands of the Southern seas, but others have, and you accept their descriptions as reliable. In the same way it is your custom to receive information about exploration, history, science, and current life, and to credit it without scruple. You call it knowledge with as much assurance, as though you were the one and only person who had secured precise results on these subjects from personal investigation.

The spiritual life described by Christianity, however, is a matter of personal experience, and not of academic

instruction. It is true that a predisposition in its favor is created by the traditions of your ancestry, and the testimony of your associates. The teachings of the Bible also re-enforce the instincts of your soul. But you are never sure in religion until all that you have been taught has been confirmed by personal investigation, not alone through processes of reason, though these are valuable, but also through the processes of the heart, which are reasonable in their character. You do not argue yourself into the love of anybody or anything. The object of your affection simply fills the whole orb of your vision, and that is quite sufficient. You do not reason yourself into faith in Jesus Christ. But having launched your soul upon the sea of His love, you come to know Him, whom to know aright is life eternal. The method becomes reasonable as soon as it has resulted in the knowledge of God through Christ.

It is difficult to determine who enjoys a musical composition the more—the educated musician who sees the scientific relation of every concord, the mathematical law of every movement; or the common man without technical knowledge, who has a passion for melody, and who simply opens his soul to the divine flood of sound, and lets his entire being be deluged with rapture. It is equally uncertain who has the deeper realization of the joys of religion: the man who has carefully analyzed doctrinal systems, and has finally attached himself to Jesus Christ because the necessities of his reason have required him to do so; or that man who out of his passion for righteousness has simply turned his soul toward the divine Spirit and has been overswept by tides of religious feeling. Each is satisfied, and each is convinced, and that is enough. "I don't know how it was done," said the blind man to his tormentors. "But one thing I do know, that whereas I was blind, now I see."

The blind man in this story expresses his certitude in four assertions. First certainty: "I am the man." When the miracle had been wrought upon him, and the neigh-

bors had asked one another, "Is not this he that sat and begged?" and some had replied, "This is he," while others had said, "He is like him," he set the whole inquiry at rest by exclaiming, "I am he." If a man can not be sure of his identity, he can not be certain of anything. His parents were ready to swear that he was the son who had been born blind. Further than that they would not go. "He is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself." They appealed to the court of last resort.

Second certainty: "I have my sight. I am the same man changed." If a man does not recognize his own state of consciousness, he does not know anything. Hot or cold, sick or well, weak or strong, happy or miserable, every man must know himself to be, if he knows anything.

Third certainty: "He who did this is divine. Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this man were not of God, He could do nothing." That is a legitimate inference from the facts in hand.

Fourth certainty: "He is the Son of God." Cast out by the Pharisees, Jesus finds him, and says, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" He answers, "Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him?" Jesus declares, "Thou hast both seen Him, and it is He that talketh with thee." And the man exclaims, "Lord, I believe." That was a proper result from all that had preceded.

Surely these convictions are possibilities in the experience of every man who is made the object of Christ's transforming grace. "I am the man," "I am that man changed," "He who wrought the change is divine," "I acknowledge Him as my Lord."

The starting point of all religious experience is conscience, that faculty in man's nature which determines moral values, which erects a standard of righteousness and inexorably demands that conduct shall measure up to it, which enables a man to know without laws on the

statute books that theft and arson and murder are inherently wrong, no matter who may say they are right, and that they are not made any more wicked by the fact that they are under the ban of the law. Conscience stands censor over the inmost self, and no man disregards it without suffering penalties of which he is aware.

But what gives conscience its terrible authority over the soul? The conviction that back of this moral standard, which the soul can not escape, is a divine Person who is responsible for its existence. As John Henry Newman says, "If, as is the case, we feel responsibility, are ashamed, are frightened, at transgressing the voice of conscience, this implies that there is One to whom we are responsible, before whom we are ashamed, whose claims upon us we fear."

Convinced of the existence of God, and of His eternal righteousness, a man brings his mind to the story of the Son of man as recorded in the New Testament. He may not be greatly impressed by the supernatural elements in that narrative, but he will be profoundly moved by the manifestation of goodness in the character of its hero. Gradually the effect of his study will be an intense admiration for this pure and holy person. At length a sudden conviction will seize his soul that He who exhibits such perfections can be no less than God manifest in the flesh.

Now everything else follows of necessity. You say that Jesus came into the world by a miraculous birth. What is your evidence? Evidence? The wonder is that He came at all. But having come, the *manner* of His advent can not be too marvelous to be incredible. You say that He wrought miracles. Where is your evidence? Evidence? The surprising thing is that, being what He was He could confine Himself, with such amazing self-restraint, to so few exhibitions of supernatural power. You say that He rose from the dead. What is your evidence? Evidence? The marvelous thing is that He should die at all, but having died, it was inevitable that He should rise from the tomb. How could death hold *Him?* You say that He ascended to Heaven. Where is

your evidence? Evidence? The wonder is that He could remain on the earth so long. One would suppose that the gravitation of His character would send Him aloft the moment His foot had touched this planet. There are no incredibilities in the story of Deity.

Convinced that Christ is God, a man trusts himself to the Lord of life and finds his character transformed by the renewing of his grace. He says, "I am the *same* man, but I am a *changed* man. Whereas I was blind, now I see." Can there be any better evidence than this of the truth of religion?

Mr. Ruskin in a letter to his father relates his experience in the following way: "I resolved that I would believe in Christ and take Him for my Master in whatever I did; that assuredly to disbelieve the Bible was quite as difficult as to believe it; that there were mysteries either way; and that the best mystery was that which gave Christ for a Master. And when I had done this . . . I felt a peace and spirit in me I had never known before, at least to the same extent; and everything has seemed to go right with me ever since, all discouragements and difficulties vanishing, even in the smallest things."

XX.

THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

CHAPTER X. 1-21.

We may presume then to say that the Gospels are the first fruits of all the Scriptures, and the first fruits of the Gospels is that of John, into whose meaning no man can enter unless he has reclined upon the bosom of Jesus.
—*Origen.*

Introduction.

JESUS has previously used the Brazen Serpent (iii, 14), the Manna (vi, 50), the Rock (vii, 37), and the Pillar of Fire (viii, 12) as symbols of Himself. He now employs the figures of the Shepherd and the Door for the same purpose. These He works out more elaborately into allegories, and together with the Vine (xv, 1-8) they constitute the only examples of their kind in the Gospels, and they are confined to this book. They seem to occupy in this Gospel a place similar to that filled by the parables in the other Gospels. The latter, however, usually illustrate the operations of the kingdom of God, rather than the relations of individual believers to Christ. The simile of the Good Shepherd is indicated in the other Gospels as follows: in the parable of the Lost Sheep (Matt. xviii, 12, 13; Luke xv, 4-7), and in such passages as Matt. ix, 36; xi, 28, 29; xv, 24.

There is an evident relation between this allegory and the case of the blind man recorded in the preceding chapter. The treatment accorded him by the Pharisees, as contrasted with the attitude of Jesus, shows clearly the difference between false teachers and the one true Teacher.

The allegory is presented in a somewhat mixed form.

The conception of the Door is thrown into view at the very beginning, but is not treated specifically until after the general characteristics of the Shepherd have been considered. Even in the allegory of the Door there is an anticipation of the fuller interpretation of the allegory of the Shepherd. Hence there is a mingling of pictures here. While the Door and the Shepherd are two distinct figures, yet Jesus appropriates them both to Himself. Logic is sacrificed for the sake of essential truth. In both types He announces Himself as the supreme authority in spiritual matters. "In relation to the fold Christ is the door; in relation to the flock He is the good shepherd." (*Westcott.*)

I. THE SHEPHERD (1-6).

The teaching here is somewhat general. The marks of distinction between the shepherd and the robber are sharply drawn before the application of the allegory to Jesus is made. The shepherd is known: (1) By the fact that he uses the one proper entrance (1, 2). The use of any other method indicates plunder and not protection. Oriental sheep-folds are open at the top, and are simply surrounded by walls or palisades. A single door gives entrance to both sheep and shepherd. The brigand and petty sheep-stealer will approach from some other quarter if not discovered. The fold is the Church universal. The sheep are believers. The shepherds are their spiritual leaders, who use the one door. (2) By the fact that the porter opens to him is the shepherd known (3). There are many flocks in the one fold. Hence there are many shepherds. The porter will give admittance to those whom he recognizes as shepherds. The figure of the porter is indeterminate. It is not to be explained precisely of the Father, the Holy Spirit, Moses, John the Baptist, or any single agency, but rather generally of any or all means by which men are brought to Christ. It is wiser not to press any point too far in the interpretation of the allegory, but to confine the mind to essentials. (3) The shepherd is also distinguished by the fact that he is recognized by the sheep (3-5). He

calleth them by name. They hear his voice, and follow him. A stranger they will not follow, but will flee from his voice. (4) The shepherd is recognized by his manner with the sheep. He exercises peculiar care over them. He leadeth them forth. He putteth them out to find pasture. He goeth before them (3, 4). In all these characterizations Jesus points to the false teachers. From this point Jesus takes up the interpretation.

II. THE DOOR (7-10).

As this is the first item in the picture, it is first considered. The relation of the shepherd to the flock is dropped for the moment, and the office of the door is taken up. "I am the door," in contrast with others who made false conditions of entrance. The reason for their conduct is seen in their motive. They are plunderers, not saviors. "All . . . before me" refers to the murderous teachers, seeking to steal, kill, and destroy, who now had their representatives all about Him, and who were the curse of the nation. They had hearers, but not sheep. The door provides opportunity for freedom. They who use it come in for shelter, go out for pasture, and find perpetual salvation. For Christ gives life in abundance. Verse 10 marks the transition to the picture of the Good Shepherd.

III. THE GOOD SHEPHERD (11-18).

1. **Parallel Uses of the Type.** In the Old Testament the figure is used to illustrate the relation of Jehovah to His people, and in a subordinate sense of true teachers and guides of Israel, as in the New Testament it symbolizes the relation of Christ and His apostles to the Church. Compare Psa. xxiii; Isa. xi, 11; Jer. xxiii; Ezek. xxxiv; xxxvii, 24; Zech. xi, 7; Psa. lxxx, 1. Christ thus identifies Himself with the Shepherd-God. The influence of the figure on music, art, poetry, and devotional literature generally is very wide and persistent.

2. **Christ Fulfills the Type.** The word rendered "good" is more precisely "beautiful;" but with the Greeks the word "beauty" is significant of "goodness," which is the highest moral beauty. The beautiful features of the Good Shepherd are, (1) that He seeks the welfare of the sheep and risks His life for their protection (11), in this respect differing from the hireling (12, 13); (2) that there is a mutual understanding between the sheep and the Shepherd (14, 15); and (3) that the Good Shepherd is universal Lord, having souls everywhere which are bound to Him by an eternal interest (16). For all His sheep He lays down His life.
3. **Christ Glorifies the Type.** He voluntarily gives Himself to this beautiful office. The Father loves Him for His sacrifice. From the Father He has received authority to perform this devotion. It carries with it the power of resurrection (17, 18).

CONCLUSION (19-21).

As on former occasions, so now there was a division of the Jews because of this teaching. Again, as heretofore, Jesus was charged with having a demon. The people were urged to place no dependence upon His words. But some retorted that His words were not those of a demented person, and insisted that a man possessed of an evil spirit could not have healed the blind man. Here belief and unbelief are strongly contrasted after John's customary method.

Hymn No. 677.

Savior, like a shepherd lead us.
Much we need Thy tenderest care;
In Thy pleasant pastures feed us,
For our use Thy folds prepare.

—*Unknown.*

Personal Questions:

1. Is there mutual recognition between the Shepherd and myself?
2. Do I hear His voice and follow Him?

Salvation Through Sympathy.

I am the good shepherd; and I know mine own, and my own know me, even as the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep.
—JOHN x, 14, 15. Revised Version.

When the old German emperor William, at ninety-one years of age, lay on his bed calmly awaiting the end of life, his wife and family and ministers of state being around him, the court preacher offered prayer and read the familiar words of the Twenty-third Psalm, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want," and so following. The dying Kaiser listened attentively, and said, "That is wonderful!" Then he fell into a slumber from which he did not wake. The gracious Shepherd had led him to green pastures and beside still waters.

Did Jesus, who was thoroughly acquainted with the Old Testament, have the Twenty-third Psalm in His mind when He employed this beautiful symbolism? He was born at Bethlehem, near the spot where David probably composed this lovely lyric. He would often see the shepherd and his flock, would observe the close relation between them, and would quickly perceive the fitness of the shepherd type to his own mission. He commissioned the restored Peter with the words, "Feed My sheep," a charge descriptive of the highest functions of the pastor. The bishop's crozier is the shepherd's crook. Peter never forgot the figure. To his fellows he said, "Ye were as sheep going astray, but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls." To the elders he wrote, "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away." Church dignitaries have often been admonished to feed, not fleece, the flock. Temporal rulers have been designated shepherds. The meaning of the figure is not ob-

scure. Twentieth century civilization, though largely segregated in cities, is not so far away from pastoral life that the symbolism of the good shepherd requires a key. The need of the shepherd's care is experienced everywhere.

The Good Shepherd is distinguished by His devotion to the sheep. "He leadeth them out." "He putteth forth His own sheep." "He giveth His life for the sheep." In the morning he appears at the sheep-fold, and calls them out to green pastures, using gentle compulsion with the reluctant. At noon-tide He leads them to the shade and the refreshing waters. At night-fall He conveys them safely home. His life is one of perfect consecration. He places Himself utterly at their service. David proudly told Saul how he rescued the lamb from the bear and the lion. It was characteristic of the shepherd's business. If the flock escaped the wild beasts, the thief and the robber were to be reckoned with.

Says Thomson in *The Land and the Book:* "A poor faithful fellow last spring, between Tiberias and Tabor, instead of fleeing actually fought three Bedouin robbers until he was hacked to pieces with their knives, and died among the sheep he was defending." Christ is the supreme exemplar of this spirit, "who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity." It is His whole life which is surrendered to our interest. Human experience is a conflict on a sinking ground. The moral philosopher ridicules us because we have not chosen wise counsels in making our contest. The apostles of culture promise to help us when we have helped ourselves. Christ puts Himself at our service, and awards us the security and success which He has won by His eternal sacrifice.

King Leopold of Belgium affects to take the people of the Congo to his heart, but actually plunders them for personal gain. His treachery is typical of the hireling, his cruelty is that of the bandit. Of Christ it is said, "When He saw the multitudes, He was moved

with compassion on them, because they fainted and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd."

The Good Shepherd knows His sheep. "He calleth His own sheep by name." There are sheep which do not belong to Him. These he does not know. Christ said that at the judgment He would declare to the vain pretenders, "I never knew you." He does not mean that He has no consciousness of their existence, but no knowledge of them based on spiritual fellowship. "He knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man; for He knew what was in man." Paul says, "If any man love God, the same is known of Him." Christ is fully aware of His own.

Themistocles boasted that he could recite the names of all the citizens of Athens, and there were twenty thousand of them. The Good Shepherd has millions of sheep distributed through many folds, but He addresses every one of them by name. To be called *His* by Him is very sweet and inspiring.

Once when Julius Cæsar was attempting to carry war into Africa he was delayed by a mutiny of his veterans in Southern Italy. He gave them immediate discharge, addressing them as "citizens." Then their affection revived, and they begged with tears that they might be restored to his favor, and be honored again with the title of "Cæsar's soldiers." After some delay their request was granted. To be Christ's own is the dearest relation on earth or in heaven.

He knows His sheep when they scarcely know themselves, and when they are not recognized as His by others. "The world knoweth us not, because it knew not Him." But He knows us. He has brought us up from the hour we entered His fold. He has watched us with affectionate interest every moment since. We have wandered away from Him so often, and have soiled ourselves so much in the mire of sin, and have been torn so sadly by enemies, that we are sometimes doubtful where

we belong or to whom. But He knows us, and calls us by name.

The sheep know the Good Shepherd. "They know His voice. And a stranger they will not follow, but will flee from him, for they know not the voice of strangers." There is a subtle law of correspondence in souls that are kin, a kind of intellectual and spiritual affinity. The minister truly speaks to *his hearers,* and to no others. The steel filings leap to kiss the magnet. The strings of the instrument throb to the touch of their own tones. William Jay quaintly said, "Christ's sheep are marked in the ear and foot; they hear His voice and follow Him." There are thousands of mortals who are only removed from the brute creation by the fact that they have possibilities of moral and spiritual life. Eating and drinking, sin and sensuality, pomp and pleasure make up their whole round of being. The Shepherd's voice seems never to penetrate the heavy folds which encase their consciences. Their deplorable state fills devout souls with agony. But if Christ does not approve Himself to these unfortunates as the chiefest among ten thousand, and the one altogether lovely, He has no method of reaching them. It is a profound mystery, but its truth is only too appallingly obvious. But the genuine disciple hears His voice, and knows His master. "I know mine own, and mine own know Me, even as the Father knoweth Me, and I know the Father." Says the prophet Isaiah, "He wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as they that are taught." There is perfect correspondence between the Shepherd and the sheep; there is mutual understanding. The result is eternal life—the gift of the Shepherd. The sheep can not earn it by following, yet they can not have it without following. So long as they hear the Shepherd's voice, and follow Him, and refrain themselves from strangers, He will never relinquish His right to them. He will fight off the wolves with His own body. He will die a thousand deaths in their defense. He will defy all hell to pluck them out

of His hand. But they are free, and with suicidal folly they can slip away from Him. A little lamb the Shepherd will fold to His bosom, a wounded sheep He will carry on His shoulder, a frightened sheep He will encourage with His staff, a lost sheep He will follow to the bleak mountain. But a silly, refractory sheep that willfully flings itself into the ravine even the omnipotent Shepherd can not save from death. He said to the foolish, "Ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life."

XXI.

DISCOURSE AT THE FEAST OF DEDICATION.

CHAPTER X. 22-42.

Since Irenæus it has remained for the sons of the apostolic spirit the crown of the apostolic Gospels.—*Lange.*

Introduction (22-24).

Apparently about two month elapsed between the discourse recorded in the preceding passage and that now under consideration. This is the interval between the Feast of Tabernacles and the Feast of Dedication. The latter celebration occurred late in December, and commemorated the purification of the Temple after the profanation by Antiochus Epiphanes. It was instituted by the Maccabees. It continued eight days, and was also known as the Feast of Lights because of the illuminations which accompanied it.

As the mention of winter is not needed in this place for Jewish readers, who would know the season in which the Feast occurred, it may have been introduced for the sake of the Gentile readers, or for the purpose of showing that the inclemency of the weather drove Jesus to take shelter in the cloisters of Solomon's porch—a fine mark of John's attention to details. It has also been suggested that this sentence is symbolical of the tempest of hatred which surrounded Jesus while He was teaching. As the Master was walking about in this colonnade, the Jews, perhaps watching for a favorable opportunity when they could put themselves between Christ and His disciples, crowded about Him, and pressed upon Him persistent inquiries touching His claims. There are two natural divisions of the discourse which ensues, the first

being introduced with a question, the second with a charge of blasphemy; the former dealing with the Messiahship of Jesus, the latter with the Divinity of Jesus.

I. THE MESSIAHSHIP OF JESUS (24-30).

The Jews profess to be greatly exercised over His mission. "How long dost Thou cause us to doubt? If Thou be the Christ, tell us plainly." Three motives may have mingled in this request: some of the questioners may have been simply curious, some may have been sincerely hesitating between belief and unbelief, and some may have wished to extort an answer from Jesus on which they could base an accusation.

1. **For Unbelief No Direct Answer (25, 26).** Candid as the question seemed, a straight affirmation of His Messiahship would not have convinced men who had rejected testimony already given. His words repeatedly delivered were a sufficient answer. Even if these were inadequate, His works were a confirmation and interpretation of them. By these the Father was testifying in His behalf; but this witness they had rejected, because they were not of His fold.

2. **For Belief High Privilege (27-29).** Between Himself and His sheep there is mutual recognition and mutual confidence. They receive at His hands eternal life. They are imperishable if they abide with Him. They can not be taken away from Him without their own consent. Being free, they can choose to leave Him. Otherwise, they are secure forever. "My Father which gave them to Me is greater than all." Out of His hand they can not be plucked. Another reading is: "That which the Father has given Me is greater than all," that is, the faithful in their combined unity are stronger than their foes. In any case loyal believers are safe eternally.

3. **Oneness with the Father (30).** "I and My Father are one." This is more than an answer to their question. The hand of the Father from which the faithful can not be taken is the hand of the Christ, the man before them. This oneness is not merely oneness of purpose, work, or power, but oneness of essence. The whole mystery of the Incarnation lies in this brief sentence.

II. THE DIVINITY OF JESUS (31-38).

1. **The Charge of Blasphemy (31-33).** The Jews taking up stones to assault Jesus plainly declared that they saw in His final answer not only a claim to the Messiahship, but an assertion of His divinity. When Jesus protests with fine irony that He does not understand which of the good works He has wrought has called forth vengeance, they tell Him that His making Himself equal with God is the occasion of their attack. The fact that Jesus does not correct them is evidence that they had not misapprehended His meaning.

2. **Reply to the Charge (34-38).** A reference to the use of the word "gods" in the Old Testament opens a formal argument by Christ (Psa. lxxxii, 6). If unjust rulers, on the principle that they are the representatives of divine authority, can be called "gods" without causing offense, shall not He whom the Father has sacredly set apart and sent into the world be permitted to call Himself "Son of God?"

   Jesus now replies to their charge by an appeal to His works. If these are not divine, then they are justified in rejecting Him; but if they are unmistakably God's works, then they ought at least to give belief to the works, and so acknowledge His unity with the Father, without whom they could not be wrought.

CONCLUSION (39-42).

The rage of Christ's enemies is impotent. He escapes out of their hands, though they seek to apprehend Him.

He withdraws beyond the Jordan to the place where John first baptized. Thither people in great numbers follow Him, and give uniform testimony to Him. All that John witnessed concerning Him they have found to be true. "Many believed on Him there" with a faith which meant devotion to Him, not mere belief in His statements.

Hymn No. 136.

The King of Love my Shepherd is,
Whose goodness faileth never;
I nothing lack if I am His,
And He is mine forever.

—*Henry W. Baker.*

Personal Questions:

1. Do I yield to Christ divine honors?
2. Am I constrained by His divinity to lead a holy life?

An Explanation of God.

"I and My Father are one."—JOHN X, 30.

The Jews interpreted these words to mean that Jesus claimed to be divine. Jesus permitted this interpretation to stand without denial. Hence we must accept this interpretation or regard Him as impostor.

During the "Reign of Terror" in France, Lavoisier fell by the guillotine as a recompense for his patriotism. "The Republic has no need of savants," remarked the functionary who signed the death-warrant of the most famous chemist of the century. Jesus was crucified for His adherence to the claim that He was one with God. The rulers of the Jews had no room in the world for a divine Savior. They affected to think His words were blasphemous. Doubtless they were correct on the assumption that Jesus was but a man. Their insisting that

He be punished with death was in consonance with the severe traditions of the past. In our milder time a man who made such pretensions would be adjudged insane, and at the most would be confined for the protection of society.

The folly and wickedness of human beings demanding divine honors have always been realized by mankind, even when it has been the vogue to apotheosize heroes. A prætor affirmed that he had seen the soul of Augustus Cæsar ascend from its ashes to the celestial abodes. One observes how little value was attached to such an elevation by those most concerned, when he remembers that Vespasian exclaimed in the moment of death, "Woe is me! I am about to become a god." The flippant view of Deity under the pagan conception relieves the assumption of divine dignity of its otherwise impious quality. But in the Hebrew thought of God's ineffable grandeur, to aspire for the honors of Deity was nothing short of unpardonable profanity. Christ's claim was the superlative degree of infamy if it was not grounded in eternal reality. The punishment visited upon Herod Agrippa would seem to be justified on the supposition that he understood the wickedness of his pride. "And upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them. And the people gave a shout, saying, 'It is the voice of a god, and not a man.' And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory; and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost."

The obvious character of Christ makes it a moral impossibility that He should have misrepresented Himself. The sinless One told the truth about Himself. He was one with God not merely in power, authority, and purpose, but in essential being. The metaphysical difficulties of this doctrine may be insurmountable for some minds. But it is wise to accept the truth as one of revelation and not of speculation, and to give the soul the comfort of taking Christ as the perfect interpretation of God.

The implications of the fact that Christ is one with the Father are exceedingly helpful to the faith of the Christian. Not the least of these is the bringing of God into personal reality. Otherwise He is very hazy to many minds. Even by those who profess themselves to be true theists God is often only a convenient fiction to account for the existence of things. Some who would spurn the charge of being agnostics apparently go little beyond those unbelievers, and content themselves with thinking of God as the Infinite Energy, whence all the phenomena of the universe take their origin. That infinite energy operates in a variety of forces, to which names are given, for purposes of distinction, but which science is teaching may probably all be resolved into a single force. That infinite energy is manifested in a diversity of material substances, which also have their separate designations, but which science is teaching may all be reduced to one primordial stuff, the variety of elements being secured simply by differences of atomic arrangement. That infinite energy is active in many kinds of living organisms, from bacteria to mammoths, but science is teaching that these may all spring from a single vital essence, which is responsible for all the diversities of what we call life. It is the power which moves the wings of the bird, the wheels of the engine, the sword of the warrior, the cry of the child, the dream of the poet. If a sufficiently intelligent being had stood on the shoreless sea of primeval matter, he could have detected in that heated ocean of vapor all worlds, all histories, all souls, all effects of human thought and activity. That infinite energy is everywhere immanent in the universe; in the opening buds of the spring-tide, in the prayers of the penitents, in the ambitions of the conqueror, in the billows of the sea. This is God to many persons who fancy they actually believe in Him. But what a dismal state they suffer, who have no other god than this! As Fitchett has said, "Who can love gravitation; or pray to electricity; or sing hymns, say, to the law of the conservation of energy? All the great offices and forces of religion perish at a breath if there be no personal God."

It is in Christ, however, that the personal God comes out into clear vision. "I and the Father are one." God is a father, and no conception of fatherhood is possible without personality. God is Christ, and Christ exists in terms of being like our own. The little child, when directed to the throne of grace, instinctively prays to Jesus, and finds in Him the concrete notion of God which satisfies a mind untrammeled by metaphysical speculation. The philosophy of a mature mind can discover no better method of realizing God.

If Christ and God are one, then there can be no question that God is good. Without this revelation God is under suspicion in many hearts. Surely Nature does not uniformly and indubitably demonstrate the benevolence of God. The disasters which overwhelm great cities from the disturbances of the earth, the relentless sway of forces, which when ignorantly opposed by man hurl him to ruin, the ten thousand calamities which make life terrible by their mere possibility, raise doubts whether there be a personal God who controls the destinies of the race, and if there be, whether He is benevolent or malevolent. Certainly history does not invariably and conclusively prove the goodness of God. The hideous nightmare of war and plunder and murder, out of which nations have been wrought into being, with all their attendant destruction of human life and character, make a poor defense of God, when His character is under scrutiny. Certainly individual human experience does not infallibly point to the goodness of God. The saints go to the stake, and the sinners to the throne. The upright are assailed for their piety and the wicked are applauded for their iniquities. These are not uniform experiences, it is true, but they occur frequently enough to make the despondent victim of earthly cruelty pause and ask, with some of old, "What is the Almighty that we should serve Him? and what profit should we have if we pray to Him?" But despite all these perturbations of one's faith, if we can see that Christ and God are one, then we can

be sure that, whatever the facts in life may appear to say against the character of God, He must be benevolent. Christ has shown Himself to be love personified. If He and God are one, it is simply because we do not understand the providence of God that we hesitate to ascribe unvarying goodness to the Eternal. In due time we shall perceive and be satisfied. Meanwhile the soul fastens its gaze upon the Christ, who is one with the Father, and says triumphantly:

"Yet in the maddening maze of things,
And tossed by storm and flood,
To one fixed trust my spirit clings,
I know that God is good."

Jesus has just been explaining that it is His supreme purpose to obtain the salvation of those who will trust Him. He has called Himself the Good Shepherd who gives His life for the sheep. He has just asserted that those who hear His voice and follow Him will be eternally secure. "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My Father's hand." Here, then, is God's great aim—the salvation of mankind. And all the occurrences of life, all the events of time, under His administration are to be bent to this end. Christ's motive is God's motive, and the intent must interpret every action. Does God require the praise of men? It is not for the purpose of gratifying His desire for adulation. What a cheap notion of Deity that would be! Does He ask for service? It is not for the sake of getting things done that could not otherwise be accomplished, nor to have the satisfaction of wielding a taskmaster's whip. What a puerile conception of God! Does He exact sacrifice? It is not because He would be propitiated by the crushing of human ambitions. It is not that He sates His anger with blood-drenched altars. What an unholy thought of God! But by praise, by service, by sacrifice He is forever drawing men into higher nobility of character, into deeper sym-

pathy with Himself, and therefore into fuller realization of their native dignity as the sons of God.

There is a story of an English army surgeon who, wounded unto death on the battle-field, but distressed by the agonizing cries of the dying soldiers about Him, edged himself along from man to man with incredible difficulty and pain, that he might impart relief to the despairing, with his hypodermic needle administering an anæsthetic, where it could lessen misery, himself dying in the very act of helping others to ease of body. Was not that beautiful? Was it not divine? It was service and it was sacrifice; it was gratuitous and yet it was under compulsion, the necessity of love. Did it not magnify the man? It is thus that the demands of God are intended to make the souls of men more glorious. Christ enables us to see that this is God's controlling policy with a lost world. He and the Father are one.

When Napoleon and his army were scouring the Alps, an avalanche swept across the ranks with thunderous force, and carried into the abyss below a little drummer boy. He was not seriously injured, but he was beyond the reach of his comrades, unless some extraordinary effort was made to rescue him. He scrambled to the top of a snow mound, and waved his hand aloft in token that he had not perished. Above him hundreds of feet away marched the great army, with never an effort to reach him, though there were many that might have stretched forth a hand to deliver him. Then the boy began to beat the military calls to which he had been trained. In that clear atmosphere each sound was heard with terrible and pathetic distinctness. Could nothing be done to rescue him? Bonaparte was told of the boy's fate, but spoke no word. What was one little drummer boy to Italy in the mind of him who called the people food for powder. The cold crept over the lad, and he quickened his efforts. But the army passed on. Melting away over the ridges he watched his comrades file on file as they vanished from his sight. Then, fearless

still, though abandoned to die, the boy suddenly changed his note. No longer the tattoo, the advance, the charge, but after a moment's delay the funeral march. That sound was the last that came from the brave drummer lad, who lies yet in the snowy winding sheet of the Alps.

Not one soul, but a world full of souls, does Christ see in a deeper and more perilous abyss than mountain heights inclose. It is the passion of His being to rescue the perishing. He has lavished Himself upon the undertaking. All that His infinite resources carry He has devoted to this supreme purpose. "Who gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity." That is the immeasurable fact which interprets God to humanity, for Christ and the Father are one.

XXII.

THE RAISING OF LAZARUS.

CHAPTER XI.

From every house the neighbors met,
The streets were filled with joyful sound,
A solemn gladness even crowned
The purple brows of Olivet.—*Tennyson.*

Introduction.

"THE miracle of miracles in the history of the Christ," says Edersheim. It is surpassed only by our Lord's own resurrection, which was to a glorified life. Godet relates that Spinoza, the great pantheistic philosopher, declared to his friends, "that if he could have persuaded himself of the resurrection of Lazarus he would have dashed in pieces his own system and embraced without repugnance the common faith of Christians."

The significance of the miracle has provoked much assault upon its credibility. But from the standpoint of divine power there is no miracle which is more difficult of performance than another. Some miracles appear more wonderful to human vision than others, but to the Omnipotent all works are equal. Unless we take the position of certain critics that any miracle is impossible, and that therefore the record of every miracle must be accounted for on other than historic grounds, there is no reason for doubting the authenticity of this story. Westcott says, "Those who deny the fact are sooner or later brought to maintain either that the scene was an imposture, or that the record is a fiction. Both of these hypotheses involve a moral miracle."

It is sometimes objected that this miracle is not nar-

rated in the Synoptics, and that this fact weighs against the integrity of the story. It must be remembered, however, that these writers confine themselves almost exclusively to the ministry of Christ in Galilee, while John deals chiefly with events in the Judean ministry. It is no more remarkable that they should omit this narrative than that John should omit the record of other raisings from the dead which they preserve.

The dramatic importance of this miracle in John's composition is that it furnishes the culminating point in the plot to destroy the life of Jesus. In the ten chapters which precede he has described how Jesus revealed Himself in every kind of manifestation which was calculated to inspire faith, only to be met by increasing unbelief and deepening hostility on the part of the Jewish rulers. Now he shows that the raising of Lazarus, the supreme revelation of the divine glory in Christ's public ministry, determined His enemies to consummate their horrid purpose.

I. THE OCCASION OF THE MIRACLE (1-16).

Sickness in the loved home at Bethany, followed by the death of a dear friend. There is here a fine sense of human feeling combined with divine power which John does not regard as incongruous. The last, as well as the first, of the seven typical miracles which he relates is wrought in the domestic circle, and each is declared to manifest the glory of the Lord. The divine and the human are thus thrown into impressive harmony.

1. **The Message from Bethany (3-6).** "Lord, behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick." Probably the exact language of the message. In Christ's first visit to Bethany (Luke x, 38) Lazarus is not mentioned. What unreported events must have occurred between these two visits in order to account for the affectionate relations of Jesus and this man? In His response to the announcement that illness has stricken His friend Jesus reveals His profound knowledge of the significance of this fact. He predicts that this

sickness will not terminate in irrevocable death, but will manifest the glory of God, and thereby the Son will be glorified.

Though Jesus loved the family at Bethany, He made no movement toward the afflicted household for two days. The journey to Bethany would require a day. It is apparent that Lazarus was already dead when the message was delivered (v. 17). Jesus waited until He had finished the work which He had in hand. The teaching applies to unanswered prayers. It is not through lack of God's love that our petitions are not immediately granted, but on account of the fullness of His knowledge.

2. **The Journey to Bethany (7-16).** Jesus finally announces His decision to return to Judæa. Bethany is not mentioned, but the hostile province in which it is located. This at once suggests the peril of His purpose. Perhaps this is His intention, in order that His disciples may gradually be prepared for the final catastrophe. They protest against His determination, and remind Him of the dangers in Judæa from which He has but recently escaped. While their words betray weakness, they also show devotion to His interests. Jesus makes no direct reply to their warnings, but gives expression to a great general principle of wide application. He tells them in effect that He is perfectly safe so long as He is in pursuit of duty. The time is short (ix, 4), but it is sufficient. He can not add to His days by caution, and no one can shorten them till His work is done. He would indeed be in peril if He should turn aside from duty (9, 10). Under a beautiful figure, which they do not understand, and later in terms which are plain, He tells them that Lazarus is dead. When they believe him to be merely sleeping, they attempt to dissuade Jesus from His purpose as being unnecessary, since sleep is a favorable symptom. But when He informs them that Lazarus is actually dead, and that He is glad it has turned out thus,

since it will enable Him to perform work which will strengthen their faith in Him, Thomas says with fine resolution, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him!" The disciple will not pretend a faith which he does not have, but his loyalty will not permit him to desert the Master in the hour of peril.

II. THE SCENE BEFORE THE MIRACLE (17-30).

On arrival at Bethany, which is but two miles distant from Jerusalem, thus making it easy for a great crowd of Jews to be present, Jesus found that Lazarus had been entombed four days, and that many friends and neighbors had assembled to engage in the solemn mourning which usually lasted seven days. Among these were doubtless many persons hostile to the Master, who would now be offered another opportunity to believe in Him (17-19).

1. **Jesus and Martha (20-27).** The characteristics of the two sisters are plainly marked in the narrative. As soon as Martha, who is engaged in some household duty, has tidings of the Master's arrival, she runs out to meet Him. Mary remaining in her chamber, absorbed in her grief, does not receive intelligence of His coming at once. When Martha gently protests that if Jesus had come sooner her brother might have been kept from death, she quickly follows with a profession of her faith in the Master's ability even now to accomplish whatever His love prompts Him to ask of His Father (21, 22). When Jesus assures her that Lazarus shall rise again, she admits that this will be true in the general resurrection, but appears to take no comfort from it in the present situation (23, 24). Then Jesus utters those immeasurable words, "I am the resurrection," etc. He would have her understand that not only has He power to impart life and to effect resurrection, but that He is in Himself life and resurrection. The soul is directed in these words not to the future, but to the present. He that believes in the Christ

even if he has died physically shall live eternally, and he that lives physically and believes shall not die eternally. "The whole history of the raising of Lazarus is a parable of life through death; of life through what is called death, of death through what is called life." (*Westcott.*) On hearing these words Martha's faith, which has been steadily developing, breaks forth into the confession, "I believe that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world" (27).

2. **Jesus and Mary** (28-32). Martha's soul being temporarily at rest through faith, she summons Mary—"The Master is come and calleth for thee"—doing so secretly, and for this purpose using a title for Jesus which will not betray Him, if her words are overheard. She knows the sentiments of some of these mourners. Jesus has not come into the town, not desiring to attract undue attention, but is near the tomb, which is outside the place, not in a public cemetery, but perhaps in a garden, as would befit the evident circumstances of the family. Thither Mary quickly came when she learned the Master had arrived, and falling at His feet uttered the same pathetic strain which had fallen from the lips of her sister (32). Meanwhile the mourners, supposing that Mary had gone to the tomb to weep there, hastily followed, that they might mingle their lamentations with hers. Martha's attempt to preserve Christ from undue publicity was thus a failure.

III. THE MIRACLE (33-44).

1. **The Emotions of Jesus** (33-38). A note is now sounded which John touches frequently in his gospel, and which is very emphatic in this chapter. The perfect humanity of Jesus is exhibited in close relationship with a wonderful display of His divinity. His affection for His friends, His sympathetic sorrow, His profound mental agitation, as manifested in this story, reveal the man as clearly as the mir-

acle itself discloses God. Three emotional outbursts are recorded here.

(1) When Jesus beheld the grief of Mary and the demonstration of the mourners it is said "He groaned in the spirit, and was troubled," or "troubled Himself," as the marginal reading has it. Into the utmost depths of that emotion we can not penetrate, but it expressed something more than a natural human sympathy. "He troubled Himself," which is the better rendering, suggests that Jesus willed the utterance of His feelings at this moment, though they were ever under perfect control. As Westcott says, Christ "took away the sufferings and diseases of men in some sense by taking them on Himself." Here then may have been a voluntary entrance of the divine mind into the very abyss of human sorrow, as symbolized by this individual case; for the death of Lazarus is the type of universal human experience, and the sorrow of the sisters is the sorrow of the world. But the agitation of Christ's spirit goes even deeper than this. It can not be explained simply as grief. The language in the original will not permit this. The margin of the Revised Version renders it, "He was moved with indignation in the spirit." There is an evident blending of anger with sorrow in the phrase, "He groaned in the spirit and troubled Himself." At what was He indignant? Many and various are the answers given to this question. (a) It is said He was indignant *at,* not *in* His spirit, being disturbed by his own weakness in yielding to a human emotion. But this is utterly discordant with His character as elsewhere delineated in the Gospels. (b) His indignation was the inevitable reaction of His divine nature against His human nature, which is another putting of the preceding explanation. But this is virtually saying that the divine and human in Jesus constitute two distinct personalities. (c) He was indignant that the sisters of Lazarus and their mourning friends should so utterly misapprehend the significance of death,

which in the view of His doctrines is not a calamity, but the providential means of bringing added glory to believers. Or, He was disturbed by the weakness of their faith in Him. But this would seem to be contradicted by His own subsequent weeping (35). (d) He was indignant at the hypocrisy of the Jews, who, while mingling their lamentations with those of the sisters, were preparing to treat Him treacherously. (e) He was indignant at the temporary triumph of evil, as represented by death, which is the consequence of sin. (f) He shudders at the thought that the miracle which He is about to perform in response to His affection for this bereaved family, and which will manifest the glory of God, will be the occasion of hastening His enemies to complete their purpose of putting Him to death. The sphere of His agitation is the *spirit,* which in the Scriptural usage is the seat of the religious emotion, in distinction from the *soul,* which is the seat of the natural affections. Perhaps there was a mingling of several of these elements in His indignation. It would seem that finally by an effort of His will He subdued the emotions which had temporarily shaken Him, and ended His agitation by exclaiming, "Where have ye laid him?"

(2) When the mourners had shown Jesus the tomb of Lazarus it is said "Jesus wept," that is, He simply shed tears. The reserve of the record is very remarkable. Jesus broke forth into lamentations over the nation and its capital (Luke xix, 41), but in this instance He exhibits deep sympathy with those whom He loves. He who later would partake of death now partakes of the sorrow caused by death.

(3) When the Jews witnessed His tears, they cried out, "Behold, how He loved him!" This was not an entirely correct interpretation, for Jesus knew that Lazarus would return to life. The sorrow of the sisters moved Him, rather than the experience of the brother. Perhaps the questioning of the Jews concerning Christ's ability to save His friend from death

may have been sincere (37), but it seems more probable that it contained a sneer of incredulity. If so, it will account for the renewed struggle in the spirit of Jesus, which is not so violent as the first, nor so open as the second, and is more quickly suppressed than either. "Shuddering in Himself again" (*Godet*), He comes immediately to the sepulcher. It is a cave and a stone is placed against its portal.

2. **The Act of Resurrection (39-44).** When Jesus commands the tomb to be opened, Martha gently protests again. Corruption has already begun, she argues. She can not endure the thought of exposing the beloved form. Her faith suffers a temporary obscuration. It is not strange that this should be, for the marvel of the miracle now performed has made many minds pause and question. Yet nothing is impossible to the Almighty. "He who has created the organic cell within the inorganic matter is not incapable of re-establishing life within the inanimate sustance." (*Godet.*) Jesus reminds the hesitant Martha that He has promised a revelation of the divine glory to her if she can believe, and the stone is removed. A prayer, not of supplication, but of thanksgiving, now follows. A command to the dead is uttered in a loud tone. The man comes forth in the clothing of "the silent house." The company is ordered to release him from the garments of the tomb. Without a word of comment the mighty demonstration of Christ's glory is allowed to make its own impression. What Lazarus said, what emotions were awakened by his restoration, what further occurred in his career—of these things nothing is known.

IV. CONSEQUENCES OF THE MIRACLE (45-57).

1. **The Witnesses Divided (45, 46).** Many of those who beheld this "sign" yielded instant faith to Jesus. Plummer suggests that all of those who actually witnessed the miracle, standing by Mary's side, were

convinced of Christ's divinity, even those who were naturally hostile to Him. But there were others who, whatever may have been their motive, went away and reported the occurrence to the authorities.

2. **The Decision of the Council (47-53).** Having convoked a session of the Sanhedrin, the chief priests and the Pharisees deliberated on what should be done in the situation. There was no question as to fact, for there was apparently no doubt that the miracle had been wrought. They were troubled about the probable outcome of the event. The multitudes would gather to the standard of Jesus. If then He should head a Messianic revolt, the Roman power would crush the Jewish nation.

   In this crisis Caiaphas, the high priest, becomes the mouthpiece of the council. He reminds the assembly of a national adage. The hour has struck when one man must die in order that the whole people may be preserved. The predestined victim is Jesus. John says that this pronunciamento is in the nature of a prophecy, though the high priest did not realize that he was exercising his prophetic function. Moreover, his proclamation was applicable not only to the people in Palestine, but to all "the children of God that were scattered abroad." From the moment that the words of Caiaphas were accepted by the Sanhedrin the doom of Jesus was sealed.

3. **The Gathering Storm (54-57).** Jesus retires to a place in the wilderness northeast of Jerusalem, not precisely identified by the name, Ephraim, given to it, and continues there with His disciples until "His hour is come." As the Passover approaches, and the crowds wend their way to Jerusalem, the curious seek for Jesus, and wonder among themselves whether He will appear at the feast. In every mind there is a premonition of the final catastrophe.

Hymn No. 139.

Strong Son of Son, immortal Love,
Whom we, that have not seen Thy face,
By faith, and faith alone embrace,
Believing where we can not prove;

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust:
Thou madest man, he knows not why,
He thinks he was not made to die:
And Thou hast made him: Thou art just.

—*Tennyson.*

Personal Questions:

1. Do I know the power of an endless life?
2. Have I the evidence of immortality in my soul?

A Very Present Help.

"The Master is come, and calleth for thee."
—JOHN xi, 28.

Bismarck once said, "If it be true that (as was reported he declared of himself) the felling of a tree was the only anxiety that ever caused Gladstone a sleepless night, I do not envy him; for it would reflect little credit upon his heart." If Christ had shown the profoundest intellect and the uttermost power without the tenderest sympathy, He would have lacked the one quality which most endears Him to humanity. The gentle grace of His compassion compels the homage of those who would stubbornly resist the authority of His will and the supremacy of His mind. And thus it has been ordained that the world shall have opportunity

"To learn not only by the comet's rush
But a rose's birth,—not by the grandeur, God,—
But the comfort, Christ."

He comes to exhibit His fellowship with human suffering, and to proffer His consolation to those who are burdened with grief. He drew near to the home of Mary and Martha under adverse circumstances, despite obvious and ever-thickening perils, against the protests of His faint-hearted disciples, who reminded Him of the cruel purpose of His enemies to destroy His life. Nevertheless He came. He had a mission to perform. He must comfort the mourner. He could do this because He was divine. He would not be overwhelmed by the sense of human misery. He knew how to relieve the sorrows of mankind.

The difference between the best that men can do in this regard and the perfect thing Christ achieves, may be illustrated by an historic contrast with the career of the myth-enshrined Buddha. He was the son of a king, so the story runs, and was endowed with royal qualities. Gifts of genius and physical beauty were his, and he easily outstripped his comrades and masters in feats of bodily and intellectual strength. But from his childhood he was possessed of a deep melancholy, from which nothing could arouse him. It was the insoluble problem of life which weighed upon his soul. To divert his thoughts from this solemn theme, the king, his father, practiced many arts. A beautiful princess became his bride. A gorgeous palace rose to receive him. Within its spacious courts the sorrows of the world were not permitted to penetrate. He knew nothing of human misery. All was light and beauty and joy within the royal precincts. But one morning the young prince with a large retinue was driven through the eastern gate of the city, and met on the road an old man, broken and decrepit. One could see the veins over his whole body. His teeth chattered, his frame was covered with wrinkles, he was hardly able to utter hollow and unmelodious sounds. He leaned upon a stick, his limbs and joints constantly trembling. "Who is that man?" inquired Buddha of the driver. "He is small and weak, his body is wasted away, he is barely

able to walk. Is there something peculiar in his family, or is this the common lot of all created beings?" "Sir," replied the servant, "that man is sinking under old age. He is without support and useless. People have abandoned him like a dead tree in the forest. But this is not peculiar to his family. In every creature youth is defeated by old age. Your father, your mother, all your relatives, all your friends, will come to this sad state." "Alas!" cried the prince, "are creatures so ignorant, so weak and foolish, as to be proud of the youth by which they are intoxicated, not seeing the old age which awaits them? As for me, I go away. What have I, the future prey of old age, to do with pleasure?"

Twice more he drove out in his chariot, only to encounter on each occasion some wretched, suffering fellow-creature. The first was a man at the point of death, parched and wasted with the fever. "Alas!" exclaimed the Buddha, "health is but the sport of a dream, and the fear of suffering must take this frightful form. Where is the wise man, who, after having seen what he is, could any longer think of joy or pleasure?" The next time he was driving to his pleasure gardens through the western gate, the prince saw a dead body on the road, lying on a bier, covered with a cloth. The friends stood about crying, sobbing, tearing their hair, covering their heads with dust, striking their breasts and uttering wild cries. The prince, again calling his coachman to witness the painful scene, exclaimed: "O! woe to youth, which must be destroyed by old age! Woe to health, which must be destroyed by so many diseases! Woe to this life, where a man remains so short a time! If there were no old age, no disease, no death; if these could be made captive forever!" Then betraying for the first time his intentions, the young prince said: "Let us turn back; I must think how to accomplish deliverance."

The sight of a mendicant brought him to a decision. The life of a devotee—austere, self-conquering, should be his. His resolution was taken. Kingdom, power, glory, wife, all must be abandoned while he shut himself up in solitude to lead the life of an ascetic. Such is the

story of his renunciation, and there is undeniable beauty in it. But there is no help in it for miserable humanity. For Buddha's remedy for the curse of human existence, with its ten thousand sorrows, was the gospel of annihilation. Existence must be regarded as a fatal illusion. Self-extinction in that Nirvana, which it is impossible to describe in exact terms, was his panacea for the ills of this mortal state.

Now Jesus of Nazareth felt the misery of the world as keenly as Buddha. Nay, He went deeper into the sorrows of humanity than any other has done. The desperate agony of embittered human life He understood to its very bottom. But He had a better way of meeting human misery than by preaching a philosophy which denies the reality of life. He came to bring consolation, and the power of endurance, and "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding." Jesus came to Bethany to weep. That is a fact which enchains the attention of the world. The Son of God shed tears. "Weak man," the lordly Roman would sneer, who turned his face and concealed it in his robes, when he would weep. "Behold! how He loved him!" exclaimed the Jews, as they saw these gracious drops of pity fall from His eyes. "Matchless exhibition of compassion!" cries the Christian, who reveres the "Man of Sorrows" as "The Lord of Glory." For this is God who is manifesting such sympathy.

In the hour of sorrow we have all felt the inadequacy of human sympathy. Perhaps we have even been exasperated by the unhelpful words of well-meaning friends. There sat Mary and Martha upon the ground with veiled faces and unsandaled feet, surrounded by a dozen or more friends and professional mourners. What an irritating experience! How little calculated to bring peace to a disturbed heart! But Jesus comes to weep great sincere tears of sorrow and sympathy. And His coming is sure to be gratefully received. There is joy even in grief, if Jesus makes His entrance into our homes.

The contrasts of sorrow and satisfaction are important. Socrates in his prison argued with his companions just before his death, that pain and pleasure are inseparable, and he illustrated it by a little quibbling symbolism about the chafing of his legs by the chain which bound him. That may have been almost an unworthy illustration from so great a man. But Christ has shown us that in the darkest night we may see the brightest light; that in the bitterest cup the sweetest draught may be found, for He cometh and calleth, and poureth in His balm, and sorrow becomes worth while, that one may have Him to administer consolation and sympathy.

He comes as the interpreter of life's mysteries, the revealer of human destiny. Said a French genius, "If Jesus had done nothing in His earthly ministry but teach men to say, 'Our Father which art in heaven,' that would have been abundant compensation for the vast outlay involved in His dwelling among men." But the Fatherhood of God was only one of His many doctrines. He came to Bethany not merely to weep, and thus show the sympathy of the paternal heart. He came to talk in His own matchless way. He pronounced one of the sublimest sentences that ever issued from the Divine mind, when He said: "I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth, and believeth in Me, shall never die."

One easily believes that John transcribed that sentence verbatim. That was an utterance which did not require a repetition. Once heard, it could never be forgotten. The critics tell us that there is some language in this great book which is purely human and some that is partly human, partly divine; but this language is all divine. The syllables are God's own choosing; the rhetorical arrangement is His. The thought is divine. Had you been present on the occasion when Christ uttered these words, you would have said: "He who speaks thus is either God the omnipotent, or the earth will now open

and swallow Him down as the deadliest blasphemer, for whom the jaws of perdition yearn." You can not conceive it possible that a man could get his breath instantly after hearing Christ utter those thrilling syllables. You can not think that any man in his senses could hear that sublime statement and be just the same man ever after. There is something inexpressibly awe-inspiring in that tremendous utterance which Jesus came up to Bethany to deliver, for it contains the revelation of the source and sustenance of life. Jesus gave a sufficient answer to the whole problem of human destiny when He said: "I am the resurrection." Had the Egyptian heard and believed, he must have forever abandoned his trivial notions of a human tribunal sitting in judgment over the character of the dead on the shore of a sacred lake. Had Plato heard and trusted, he would have smiled at the feebleness of his argument for the immortality of the soul when compared with the majestic certainty of this immortal giver of life. What need had any Greek of Eleusinian mysteries to protect him in peril by sea or land, if he could have vital union with One who said: "If any man believe in Me he shall never die?" All intelligences have inquired about life after death. It is the agony of the human heart in all ages that so little has been revealed of the shadowy land. But Jesus stood at the tomb of Lazarus on that eventful day, with the weeping company about Him, and answered for all time the question of all philosophies, and all religions, and all agnosticisms, "I am the resurrection and the life." And it is the only soul-soothing answer humanity has ever obtained. You swing your telescope of reason far out over that field of inky darkness, which spreads itself like a pall beyond the river of death, whose hither shore is visible, but whose farther banks are lost in impenetrable darkness, and you will descry only a few twinkling stars of hope, but no great sun-blaze of certainty. Christ alone speaks definitely on the question—"If a man die shall he live again?" And His solution of the mystery is this: "He that believeth in Me shall never die."

He comes to work a wonder, and to demonstrate His unfailing power. He came to Bethany to perform the all-inclusive miracle of raising the dead. Before the cave, in which His friend was entombed, He shouted, "Lazarus, come forth!" and the dead proceeded to enter anew upon abundant life. In like manner He comes to charm men away from the death of sin into the life of righteousness. It is indisputable that Christ never comes into any human life without working miracles. Wherever He enters there is transformation of character and entrance into newness of life.

Many good people are perplexed because they do not witness such supernatural interventions in our times as were shown in the period of Christ's earthly ministry. Alas! their eyes seem to be holden, that they can not see! The greatest wonders are being constantly wrought in their very presence. There are grades and differences in miracles. The lowest form is the physical, like turning water into wine or healing the sick. Above this is the miracle of mental elevation, like the divine inspiration of the writers who gave us the Scriptures. Higher than either are miracles of spiritual transformation. All these were witnessed on the day of Pentecost. Cloven tongues of fire sitting on the heads of the apostles were seen. A sound as of a rushing mighty wind was heard. A thrill of ecstasy was felt. These phenomena were physical. Then the disciples spoke with languages in which they had never been instructed. That was the miracle of intellectual illumination. Then Peter, the vacillating and impetuous coward, was transformed into Peter the lion-hearted, brave, steady and unwavering; and three thousand people were converted. That was the spiritual miracle. Now Jesus is not engaged in our day in performing many physical miracles. I do not doubt His ability to walk the waves of the Atlantic as He trod the surface of Galilee, or to cure the paralytic in New York as easily as He did in Jerusalem. It is simply a matter of expediency with Him. For reasons which are sufficient to His wisdom, He is not performing many such wonders apart from the employment of modern scientific

agencies. But He does more frequently show His power by lifting men above themselves, and by inspiring them with an intellectual activity quite transcending their native powers. He enables the uncultured to preach His gospel with an eloquence which no instruction of the schools can impart. He qualifies them to offer prayers, which surpass the grandest liturgies we possess, and He inspires them with ability to overcome cultured paganism and learned agnosticism in a manner which outrivals all philosophy and out-maneuvers all logic. Then He does perform miracles of spiritual regeneration in every quarter of the globe. Apollonius of Tyana, Æsculapius, Aristeas, and others were said by their contemporaries to work miracles, but they died, and their reputed powers went with them into the tomb. Miracle workers, magicians, soothsayers have come and gone. Isaiah saw the astrologers, star-gazers, monthly prognosticators fail before the judgments of God. But Christ has gone on working miracles for nineteen centuries. It is a fascinating story. He was supposed to be dead, and was pent up in a rock-hewn sepulcher. But on the third day He walked in beauty and strength among His friends. He was afterward seen to sweep skyward in a radiant cloud, fit chariot for an ascending King. Yet He evidently did not abandon the world, for His power has continued everywhere in the earth. He had vanished from the sight of men a considerable period, when Saul of Tarsus, persecuting His followers, was met on the Damascus road by Him, and transformed into a Christian apostle. Jesus had been derided as a fallen dead man for a couple of centuries, when Julian the Apostate, wounded on a field of battle, flung a handful of blood into the air, and cried: "Thou hast conquered, O Galilean!" Triumphed He undoubtedly had, for though Diocletian had, after a merciless persecution, struck a medal with the boastful inscription, "The Christian religion has been exterminated," yet in a few short years Christianity captured the Roman empire. On through the centuries He has gone winning the world to Himself. This He has done by the perpetual performance of miracles in the transformation of

character. He has turned the bestial libertine and the sottish drunkard into apostles of purity and sobriety. He has crowded selfishness out of narrow hearts, and filled the empty chamber with Himself, making it a temple of God.

"He speaks, and listening to His voice,
New life the dead receive;
The mournful, broken hearts rejoice,
The humble poor believe."

What greater miracles than these can any man ask as the proof of Christ's continuous power?

SECTION IV.

PERIOD OF JUDGMENT AND TRANSITION.

CHAPTER XII.

THIS chapter has been called "the watershed of the Gospel." It marks the point of transition from the public ministry of Jesus to the more private disclosures of His divine love which were made during the last days of His earthly life.

We now enter upon the period of judgment in Christ's public ministry. The manifestation of Christ's glory in works and words to the world is closing. The witnesses have been presented in the foregoing chapters. The opposite results of belief and unbelief have been chronicled from time to time as the action of John's gospel has moved on toward its conclusion. The total effects will be shown in the culminating events of Christ's passion, death, and resurrection. These manifestations of His glory will occur chiefly in the presence of His disciples, who will finally prove themselves to be full of faith and devotion, save in a single instance.

The section falls into the following parts:

1. THE SUPPER AT BETHANY.
2. THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY.
3. THE QUEST OF THE GREEKS.
4. THE FINAL JUDGMENT.

XXIII.

THE SUPPER AT BETHANY.

CHAPTER XII. 1-11.

If this is not a picture constructed wholly by art, it represents the recollections of one who had himself been present at the events of the day, who had moved freely to and fro, and very probably talked them over after the day was done.—*Sanday.*

Six days before the Passover—the last and greatest one in the life of Jesus—He comes to Bethany, which John distinguishes as the home of Lazarus, who had been raised fro mthe dead. What memories cluster about the place! It is probably Saturday night, at the close of the Jewish Sabbath. The next day, corresponding to the Christian Sunday, the triumphal entry into Jerusalem occurs.

I. THE SUPPER (1-8).

Compare accounts of the sam eevent in Matt. xxvi, 6-13, and Mark xiv, 3-9. The supper seems to be occasioned by gratitude for the work wrought in Bethany. It is a kind of semi-public testimonial, a warm-hearted protest against the decree of the chief priests and Pharisees (xi, 57). It occurs in the house of Simon the leper, as we learn from Matthew and Mark. Perhaps this man had been healed by Christ, and possibly he was a relative or intimate friend of Lazarus, who is the figure of distinction in the scene, and who sits as guest; so the mention of his presence would indicate. At this supper Martha serves—a characteristic touch (Luke x, 40).

1. **A Surprising Occurrence (3).** Mary will also serve, and in her characteristic fashion. Toward the close of the meal she breaks a flask of nard—evry precious—and anoints the Master as He reclines at

table. Several points of extravagance are noticeable in her conduct. The financial expenditure is very considerable. The cost of the perfume was not less than $100 in our money. The flask was hermetically sealed, and could not be broken without the loss of all its contents. The act of devotion itself ran beyond the conventional bounds of hospitality, for Mary not only anointed the head of Jesus, as Matthew and Mark relate, but also His feet, as John records. But Mary's devotion made still further sacrifice. The profusion of the liquid perfume fairly drenched the feet of Jesus; whereupon she unbound her hair—a disgrace for a Hebrew woman in public—and wiped them with her long tresses. This was the utmost stretch of personal homage. "No service is too mean for her person. All that she *is* belongs to Him, as well as all that she *has*." (*Godet.*) Perhaps she had heard of the deed which the sinful woman in Galilee had performed in devotion to Christ, and was determined that no friend of His should fall short of the alien.

2. **An Ignoble Protest (4-6).** The churl Judas has not fineness of soul enough to see the beauty of this act, and condemns it with coarse indelicacy. Mere courtesy ought to have withheld his blame. The Synoptists do not mention his name. Matthew says "the disciples" uttered complaint. Mark says, "Some" were indignant. But John knew the inspiration of their resentment, and puts the figure of the malcontent before us. The plausible reason which Judas gives for his censure only veils the iniquity of his heart. Avarice was the spring of his indignation. He carried the bag and was accustomed to pilfer its contents, John hints. The "poor" for whom he cared were represented by himself exclusively. In addition to avarice, disappointment over Christ's whole program doubtless actuated him. He had witnessed the attempt of the multitude to make Christ a king after the feeding of the five thousand, and could not approve of His refusal. His apostasy

in spirit had then been disclosed (vi, 70, 71). His irritation only waited for such a chance to express itself as was afforded by this occurrence.

3. **An Unexpected Commendation (7, 8).** "Let her alone," etc. Do not disturb the sanctity of this beautiful deed. She has anticipated my embalming. It is a parting tribute. If this tender ministry were performed after My death no one would condemn it. Why do you object to it now? In a few days I shall be gone. Perhaps she foresees My doom in the gathering darkness, and would comfort Me. The poor you have with you always—there is a constant obligation. Me ye have now, but not forever—there is a temporary and immediate obligation. The encomium pronounced by Jesus is given in more extended form by the other evangelists. "Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this that this woman hath done be told for a memorial of her." (Matt. xxvi, 13.) World-wide fame for Mary; world-wide infamy for Judas.

II. THE SEQUEL (9-11).

The chief priests were enraged by the results of Christ's increasing popularity. Every triumph of Jesus, according to John's record, only intensified the hatred of the rulers. He has no sooner received this superlative tribute of affection than they strike at Him. This time it is through his friend Lazarus. The crowds run together to see him. The dead man raised to life is a perpetual memorial of Christ's power. Belief is developing every day, and for this reason they are furious.

Hymn No. 694.

She loved her Savior, and to Him
Her costliest present brought;
To crown His head, or grace His name,
No gift too rare she thought.

—*William Cutter.*

Personal Questions:

1. Do I count the cost of my gifts to Christ?
2. Have I estimated the cost of His gift to me?

Divine Extravagance.

"Then said Jesus, Let her alone."—JOHN xii, 7.

Thomas Carlyle went one day with the artist Millais to look at the latter's house. After gazing with wonder at all its splendors, its marble pavements, its white marble columns, its stately staircase and beautiful dados, he turned to Millais and said, in his brusque manner, "Has paint done all this, Mr. Millais?" The painter laughed and replied, "It has, Mr. Carlyle." "Then," said the occupant of the modest house at Chelsea, "all I have to say is, there are more fools in the world than I thought there were." That people should pay an artist for bits of canvas smeared with paint sums of money of sufficient magnitude to enable him to live like a prince is a thing calculated to stagger many persons who are devoid of an æsthetic passion, though one must feel that Carlyle was slyly facetious rather than dead in earnest when he spoke thus to Millais. Lavish expenditures which apparently serve no practical end, like that of Mary at Bethany, puzzle matter-of-fact persons seriously. Judas Iscariot was a thief—we have it on John's word—and had the bag, and carried away what was put therein; and the poor he cared for were confined to himself. But there are honest people, with an earnest desire to see worthy things accomplished in society, who ask, "To what purpose is this waste?" when they observe enormous gifts bestowed upon objects which they feel are not related to any serious, business-like undertaking. They have not discovered the truth of George W. Cable's aphorism, that "Religion without poetry is as dead a thing as poetry without religion." There is never an act of apparently prodigal benevolence that some one who

knows the arithmetic of the world better than he does the algebra of love will not hasten to pronounce his condemnation on the waste. It is an edifying thing to observe how Jesus disposes of such a case.

Let us paraphrase His words. "Do not vex this woman," He virtually says to His disciples (and we learn from Matthew that they all murmured when one had started the protest), "Be gentlemen at least. How rude, indelicate, and boorish it is to blurt out your complaint in her presence. If you can not understand this beautiful act, do not trample the woman in the dust who was capable of doing it. Moreover, I approve of what you call 'this waste.' She has done a good work on Me. If you can not appreciate it, will you not be considerate enough to let Me have some joy in it? Do not worry about the poor for whom you profess such concern. You will have opportunities enough for charity in their behalf. But I shall not be with you much longer. If I were ready for the tomb you would not grudge the attentions which affection would pay to My body. Why protest now that this woman has anointed Me in advance of My burial? Be assured that this beautiful deed will run round the world. No power can hem it in. Wherever the gospel is preached this that she has done will be repeated as a memorial of her." He might have added with equal pertinency, "And your cheap criticism will stand up against you forever."

Let us get out of the world of calculation once in awhile, and into the realm of ideal love. Economy, prudence, frugality—these are exemplary virtues, but they are means to an end: they enable their possessor to be extravagant when the justifiable opportunity arrives. When love triumphs the entire hoard of a life-time must be sacrificed. Have you never heard of a rich man beggaring himself for the sake of a son dearer to him than the accumulations of half a hundred years?

Let there be a little more of the fragrance of wasted perfume in the world. If devout persons wish to squan-

der their substance on the Lord, ought we to take out a pencil and estimate the cost, and reckon what might have been accomplished with the price, if it had been applied to a practical thing?

If a man spends a large amount of money on his friends, for sheer love of them, and not for the sake of display, is it not churlish to censure him? Particularly if you know he is generous in his contributions to the welfare of the unfortunate. If soldiers hurl themselves against immovable ranks of enemies, and are dashed to pieces like the billows breaking on a rocky coast, just because they will show their contempt of death and their love for the flag, shall we carp about the needlessness of their sacrifice? If a man will give everything he owns to Jesus Christ, and reduce himself to poverty that he may follow his Master without a single distraction, shall we call him visionary and impractical?

The newspapers recently reported that a man in the West had years ago deeded all his property to a missionary society, and now in his old age he had been compelled to accept the bounty of a public institution for the poor. The tale proved to be an invention, but suppose it had been true—though it might have reflected on the beneficiaries of his liberality—would not the act itself have been beautiful? And is there too much beauty of that kind in the world?

When Rebecca Salome Foster, affectionately known as the "Tombs Angel," perished in a terrible fire in New York, eminent lawyers addressed the various courts then in session, expressing their profound sorrow over her death, judges pronounced eulogies upon her character from the bench, and the entire body of one court, including every subordinate officer, attended her funeral. Who was this woman, that she should be the recipient of such unwonted honors? She was a noble soul lavishing her life upon the unfortunate and the sinning. One of the judges in his address in court said: "Her appearance at the dark and gloomy prison cell was to the inmates

like the entrance of a veritable sunbeam. Numberless lonely and weary hearts have been cheered, gladdened, and even made radiant by her kind ministrations and words of good cheer, and numberless persons who had strayed from the strait and narrow way were brought back by her sweet influences to the paths of rectitude and virtue." Was that life lost amid the ruins of the criminal classes to whom her work carried her? On the morning of her funeral an Italian woman who had been greatly helped by the "Tombs Angel" in two trials for murder from which she had escaped with acquittal, came to the matron of the prison and said: "I haven't got much money. I am not fit to go to the church in this dress; I 'll just go and look in. She was my friend. I have twenty-five cents. Do you suppose if I bought a quarter's worth of flowers they 'd take them in?" When assured that probably they would, the poor creature went away to purchase her tribute of love for the woman who had befriended her in a time of awful peril.

Can we estimate the worth of such expenditures in any terms familiar to the commercial world? "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto Me." That is the justification for sacrifice. These deeds of uncalculating love are grateful to the Master. Christ's disciples did not dream that He who was so strong and wise had any need of Mary's extravagant tribute of affection. They did not fathom the anguish of His spirit occasioned by the world's cold contempt. But He says: "Let her alone. She hath wrought a good work on Me." Against all the criticism of men upon deeds that involve sacrifice Jesus is protesting that these are done for His sake, and that to Him they are the source of deep joy. Cæsar Augustus was accustomed to sit one day each year in the public market-place garbed as a mendicant, to receive the alms of the people. Some persons may regard this as an edifying example of humility, though others may construe it as an exhibition of secret pride. But Jesus would have His followers understand that in every destitute and miserable human being in the world, however

ragged and foul, He is offering Himself as a suppliant for kindness and mercy. If we inquire how we may pay Him the personal tribute which it is evident He so much values, let us learn that whatever is wrought for the elevation of those for whom He died is given directly to Him.

It must have been observed by all careful students of social progress that the persons who are usually regarded as visionary are for the most part the benefactors of the world. The disciples were afraid that the poor would be overlooked if it became the custom for devout friends of Jesus to lavish their gifts upon Him. But he assured them that if they were steadily, regularly, and consistently ministering to the poor who were always before their eyes, they might without injury to others or themselves perform extraordinary acts of love to their Master. If enthusiastic women will rhapsodize in religious feeling, if the saint will linger long hours upon his knees in adoration and communion, if the pietist will meditate and fasten his eyes upon the Lord when he might be doing something to help others, let us not be irritated by these demonstrations of devotion to the person of Christ, let us not decry them as making no capital for the kingdom of God. How do we know their value? And have not the deeply spiritual always shown themselves to have the interests of practical Christianity upon their hearts? Have they not built hospitals and orphanages? Do they not labor for the rescue of the depressed populations of their own and foreign lands? And if they do not always evince the most practical intelligence in directing the work of redeeming society, is it not something that they are giving expression to those lofty ideals which develop character, and is it not more that they are gratifying God by their complete dedication to Him?

Well and truly sings Browning's Abt Vogler:

"All we have willed or hoped or dreamed of good shall exist;
Not its semblance, but itself; no beauty, nor good, nor power
Whose voice has gone forth, but each survives for the melodist
When eternity confirms the conception of an hour.
The high that proved too high, the heroic for the earth too hard,
The passion that left the ground to lose itself in the sky,
Are music sent up to God by the lover and the bard;
Enough that He heard it once: we shall hear it bye and bye."

XXIV.

THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY.

CHAPTER XII. 12-19.

Whether we regard the sublimity of its thought, the width and spirituality of its conception of religion, the depth of its moral insight, or the tragic pathos of its story, we can not but feel that we have before us the work of a master mind.—*James Drummond.*

Introduction.

He who had hitherto resisted every proposal of the multitude to pay Him royal honors now on the eve of His passion yields to the enthusiasm of the people. The narrative herein given must be compared with Matt. xxi, 1-11; Mark xi, 1-11; Luke xix, 29-40, in order to obtain a full appreciation of the event which it records. Each of the evangelists appears to describe it from a different point of view. The Synoptics evidently follow Jesus from Bethany, but John starts with the crowd in Jerusalem, which, on hearing that Jesus is approaching the capital, hurries away to meet Him. Moreover, John fits the story into the dramatic scheme of his work. He does not attempt to present a complete detailed description of the triumphal entry. He wishes chiefly to show its causal connection with the final condemnation of Jesus. From the raising of Lazarus onward each event brings the climax of the tragedy nearer. The triumphal entry dispells every feeling of hesitation which has restrained his adversaries.

I. THE ENTHUSIASM OF THE PEOPLE (12-13).

The day following the supper at which Mary anointed Jesus it became known in Jerusalem that Jesus would come into the city. Having spent the night in Bethany,

it is evident from Mark's narrative that Jesus did not begin His progress toward Jerusalem until the latter half of the day. It was too late on His arrival in Jerusalem for Him to accomplish anything further. He therefore returned to Bethany for the night, and the expulsion of the traders from the Temple occurred on the following day. The crowd which moved from Jerusalem to meet Him must have included travelers from many countries, who had come to celebrate the Passover, though a very large proportion of them were doubtless Galileans. Those who started earliest from Jerusalem reached Bethany in time to form an escort for Jesus on His entrance into the city. The rest must have met Him on the road and swelled the company attending Him. Taking palm branches—emblems of strength, beauty, peace, and joy—they waved them before Him, and cried, "Hosanna," etc. Their words, as well as their actions, showed that they intended to salute Jesus as Messiah. The phraseology of the people is given variously, for their cries would not always be the same. These acclamations are taken from the 118th Psalm, which is said to have been written for the Feast of the Tabernacles, after the captivity, or for the dedication of the second Temple, and which is distinctly Messianic. "Hosanna," meaning "Save, I pray," is nearly equivalent to the English, "God save the king!" The words, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel," a better reading than that of the Authorized Version, places the divine work and the national mission of the Messiah in perfect unity. There can be no mistaking the meaning of the multitude.

II. THE ACQUIESCENCE OF JESUS (14-18).

It is evident that Jesus deliberately entered into this movement. He began this progress, knowing that He would receive the acclamations of the people. He even prepared to make His entrance into Jerusalem as impressive as possible. The Synoptists relate that He sent two of His disciples to secure an ass, which John simply says

He "found," and on which He made His advance in royal fashion. This animal was chosen, not so much as a mark of humility, though it did serve this purpose, as an indication that Christ's kingdom was based, not upon wealth and military power, with which horses and chariots were identified in the mind of the Jew, but upon gentleness and peace. The free quotation from Zech. ix, 9, which John would have us understand is prophecy now fulfilled by Christ, accords with this view. It is tantamount to saying, "A king who comes in this fashion will never be an oppressor." The significance of all this the disciples did not grasp at the moment; but after the ascension and the outpouring of Pentecost they understood it as fulfillment of prophecy, and realized their own unconscious part in it (15, 16).

There are apparently two multitudes mentioned in verses 17, 18, confirming the description already given. There are those who came from Bethany with Jesus, having witnessed the raising of Lazarus, and there are those who went out from Jerusalem to meet Him, having heard the report of this great miracle. In both cases the enthusiasm is due to the same cause, and this is also the cause which urges the rulers to hasten their evil machinations.

III. THE DESPAIR OF THE PHARISEES (v. 19).

The official enemies of Jesus now realize that halting measures will no longer answer their purpose. "The world," they exclaim with an exaggeration born of their discomfiture, "is gone after him." The counsels of Caiaphas (xi, 49, 50) ought long ago to have prevailed. No time can be lost. Henceforth the whole ecclesiastical organization is solidly massed against Jesus.

Hymn No. 150.

Ride on, ride on in majesty!
Hark! all the tribes Hosanna cry;
O Savior, meek, pursue Thy road
With palms and scattered garments strowed.
—*Henry H. Milman.*

Personal Questions:

1. Is Christ my King, or do I yield tribute to another?
2. Do I worship Christ with joyous acclamations?

Wanted—By the World.

"Behold, the world is gone after Him."—JOHN xii, 19.

It is an aphorism in free governments that the people can be depended upon. The popular instinct is reliable. When the multitude follows its native impulses, the politician in a republic discovers the safe path for his feet. Travelers tell us that "there are shoals of turtles that regularly swim from the Bay of Honduras to the Cayman Islands near Jamaica, a favorable spot for laying their eggs, and make this distance of four hundred and fifty miles with such precision that in thick weather ships can sail under the guidance of their rustling in the water." It is thus by the correct interpreting of the people's movements that statesmen have learned how to order their own courses.

The popular judgment is with Christ to-day, as it was in the days of His earthly career. The Scribes and the Pharisees, the priests and the elders, whose interests seemed to be imperiled by the ministry of Jesus, sought to destroy Him, but "the common people heard Him gladly." The rulers disconsolately said to one another, as they witnessed the enthusiasm of the people at Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem, "Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? Behold, the world is gone after Him!" They expressed their discomfiture in an exaggeration of the truth, but they unconsciously made a prophetic utterance which is being fulfilled in our times. Wherever Christ is clearly seen He is in almost unanimous demand. The pulpit which does not proclaim Christ as the hope of the world has no grip upon the people.

If we are honestly seeking the reasons which make Christ the center of attraction wherever He is disclosed in His real character, we have not far to go. In the first place, He knows men, and they recognize in Him one who understands them with marvelous exactness and perfect sympathy. St. John says of Him, "He knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man, for He knew what was in man." The basis of this knowledge was in His own complete human nature. He was a kind of epitome of humanity. He summed up in Himself all there is in our human nature except sin, which was brought in from the outside, an alien admixture, more foreign to us than are the depressed populations of Europe to our nation. As the old theologians used to say about Christ's human nature, it is "without excess or defect." He is all that any man is, and no more than any man is, as a man. He is not abnormal in what He is, or in what He is not, sinlessness alone excepted. This makes Him an inspiring and helpful personality at once. Men say, when they read His words, examine His acts, and feel the influence of His life, "Here is a man who knows me better than I know myself." Margaret Fuller once expressed the desire to explore the entire cycle of human experience. Christ is the only person who can be said to have realized that vast ambition, and it has made Him an universal character. He is the one whole man. He has described the circumference of human possibilities. He expresses what humanity feels about sin and righteousness with a fullness which embraces the deepest moral consciousness of the race. The commandments of God are written upon the texture of the human soul. When Christ speaks men hear a familiar voice. They recognize in Him the prophet and seer of universal humanity. He thus becomes the articulate exponent of their greatest aims, their noblest feelings, their sublimest sentiments. What wonder that He should be so universally attractive! "Behold, the world is gone after Him!"

Again, Christ commands the attention of the world because he knows God. This knowledge is based on His

divine nature, as His knowledge of men is based on His human nature. He is the expression of God in terms of human life. With remarkable felicity He is called the Word. He is the manifestation of God in the flesh. This makes Him wondrously attractive, for the world is anxious to learn about God.

What other subject would hold the multitude so continuously and so long? We are surprised that a few thousand people will crowd the largest auditorium of a city to listen to political harangues during a stirring campaign. We wonder at the throngs which nightly repair to the numerous theaters. But it is a far more impressive thing to behold the millions who throughout the entire world congregate in churches, cathedrals, and chapels to hear about God. Even the infidel lecturer secures his audience by talking *against God*. Any mountebank or charlatan can obtain a hearing if he will speak about God. There is no topic more current or more compelling.

If we can find any one who will give us a helpful idea of God we are ready to follow him anywhere. That explains the vogue of many a fantastic cult which is to-day imposing upon the credulity of the race. There is a subtle feeling that possibly the most grotesque religious leader may be able to make more obvious and intelligible the character of God. Now, Christ is the supreme revelation of God. Philip's natural request, "Show us the Father and it sufficeth us," is met with the response, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father also." God comes forth into clear shining in the figure of Jesus Christ.

Moreover, Christ knows how to bring man and God together. This knowledge is based on his complete divine-human nature. "There is one God, and one mediator between God and man, the man Jesus Christ." The streams of heaven and earth flow together in Him. By showing the infinite pity of God, and the amazing love of the Father in heaven, He is attracting the sinful race back to the throne of the Eternal. By His cross He is perpetually reconciling men to God. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me," is His promise, and every hour since His exaltation upon

Calvary has witnessed the fulfillment of that prediction. "Behold, the world is gone after Him."

It is sometimes suggested that the Gospel is effete because the Churches in some instances fail of accomplishing the salvation of society. The critics apparently forget that the custodians of Christ's teachings may themselves be at fault through lack of simple fidelity to their Master. The permanency of Christ's message to humanity is one of its greatest wonders. "Heaven and earth shall pass away," said Jesus, "but My words shall not pass away." Other men's words and works become obsolete or require emendation. The philosophers, scientists, critics change their positions and take new points of view. The author corrects the mistakes of his first edition in subsequent issues. But there are no amendments to the Sermon on the Mount. Christ has not abated His utterances on any subject in the most trivial degree. His words ring as strong and awaken as hearty response in the souls of men now as ever. No apology for Him is ever necessary. Paul needs an occasional defender. Luther requires an advocate from time to time. Wesley demands an interpreter to reconcile us to his peculiarities. But Jesus stands on His own merits. It is an impertinence to explain Him. He is still saying, "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" And the challenge is never taken up. The charm of Christ's life as narrated in the memorials of the Evangelists is perennial. Says Romanes: "True or not, the entire story of the cross, from its commencement in prophetic aspiration to its culmination in the Gospel, is by far the most magnificent presentation in literature. And surely the fact of its having been lived does not detract from its poetic value." The person of Christ stands central to all this. If He be preached effectively His gospel will not lose its hold upon the world. Let it never be forgotten that, as of old, so now, the people are "all waiting for Him."

The human heart is ever the same despite the changing environment of life. It is difficult to believe this when the lives of the lordly and the opulent have been overlaid with luxury and ornament. But, let suffering lay bare the elemental passions of men, and we see clearly that we are all alike, whatever our outward estate.

The old Czar of Russia, father of the reigning sovereign, most colossal of monarchs, forgot his grandeur at the bedside of his dying wife, and broke forth into uncontrollable lamentations when he discovered that she could no longer respond to his affectionate salutations. Gambetta, in the hour of one of his oratorical triumphs, fell into passionate weeping, unstrung and unmanned by the death of his aged mother, the news of which had just been brought to him. But the other day a great savant fell dead in his lecture hall when told that his wife had passed into the eternal world. We are all the same kind of people. Strip off the plumage of the powerful and the pompous, and see how common are the needs of the world. The prince and the pauper are alike in this. The Gospel finds converts in the Roman emperor's household as well as among the fishermen of Galilee. The message of Christ is to the heart of man, and it can not become obsolete until the human heart loses its native qualities.

How unique is that sense of fellowship with Jesus Christ which is experienced by every soul to whom He is made known. There is nothing like it respecting any other character in history. When our dearest friends pass away we seem to retain them for a little while in our consciousness. The rooms they occupied, the books they read, the tools they used, the garments they wore, everything they handled or touched or employed suggests their spiritual presence. But after awhile the sensation of continuous fellowship fades. The afterglow of the sunset deepens into twilight and then into darkness. Then memory idealizes them. They become half divine under the spell which death has woven over their persons. But the sense of personal communion is gone. Thomas Carlyle says of his mother, "O pious mother! kind, good, brave, and truthful soul as ever I have found, and more

than I have elsewhere ever found in this world, your poor Tom, long out of his schooldays now, has fallen very lonely, very lame and broken, in this pilgrimage of his; and you can not help him or cheer him by a kind word any more. From your grave in Ecclefechan Kirkyard yonder you bid him trust in God, and that also he will try if he can understand and do." This is the feeling we have about all great and good characters except Christ. They can not help us now that the veil has dropped between us and them. But He who is alive for evermore, having parted the curtains which death hung before our vision, is yet with us, and His words are spirit and they are life; they nourish us unto eternal strength. It is He whom we must offer to the world, for it is He whom the world can receive into communion.

It is a principle in art that in the composition of a picture all the parts shall be so arranged as to lead the eye inevitably to the characteristic feature. Whatever prevents this is a capital defect. Accessories are only important as they help this end. When Varelst, the Dutch painter, made his tulips so glorious that they drew attention away from the face of James II, in whose portrait he had placed them, he violated this canon. So did Haydon when, in his picture of Christ's Triumphal Entry, he made the ass on which the Master rode more attractive than the figure of Jesus. So did the Italian artist who, in His Last Supper, made the chalice on the table finer than the face of the Lord who hallowed it. So does the theologian who fascinates by his metaphysics, or the preacher who charms by his rhetoric, while Christ is but dimly outlined.

Worship itself may hinder the true apprehension of Christ. A liturgy is a fine thing if it leads to Christ, and a bad thing if it draws the mind away from Him. Symbolism is excellent if it distinguishes Christ, and execrable if it extinguishes Him. It is absurd to be agitated over the correct color for an altar cloth, if that ornament conceals Christ. A bare table would be vastly better if He

could thus be more clearly seen. There is no serious objection to the burning of incense if the fragrant cloud does not obscure Christ. You can tinkle bells, and sprinkle consecrated water, and adorn yourself with ecclesiastical millinery, and exercise yourself with mysterious genuflections, so long as you do not forget Christ. He must always occupy the center of your stage. He must always sit at the head of your table. He must always be the presiding genius of your ceremonies. He it is for whom the world waits.

In the Church of Notre Dame in Paris they show you the coronation robes of Napoleon Bonaparte. You are held off at a reverential distance to admire the gold and ermine. But you are all the while thinking of the man who wore those garments, and made them great. You would give far more than the paltry gratuity you hand the custodian of those clothes if he would introduce you to the masterful mind that rendered those tawdry rags glorious, and the will that dared to crown his own head with the authority of an empire. So it is the Christ, and not the swaddling clothes of ceremonialism, that the world longs to behold. Our ministry is weak in proportion as it obscures Christ. It is effective in the measure with which it brings Him into open view. "The world is gone after Him."

XXV.

THE QUEST OF THE GREEKS.

CHAPTER XII. 20-36.

When we consider how obscure was the corner in which St. John was born and how humble the calling to which he was bred, we can not but wonder that it should have been given to him to write books which have already lasted for nearly two thousand years, and yet appear to have only commenced their career of usefulness.

—Stalker.

THE scene is probably the Court of the Gentiles, in the Temple at Jerusalem. The time is uncertain, being either Wednesday evening or Thursday morning. This is the only incident which John records between the Triumphal Entry and the events which occurred on the evening of the Last Supper. This episode is not mentioned in the Synoptics. The days between Sunday and Thursday were crowded with events, according to the other evangelists, but this one which the others omit is inserted by John because it fits into his purpose. It not only marks the closing of Christ's public ministry, but it exhibits a foreshadowing of His passion.

I. THE PETITION (20-22).

The petitioners are Greek proselytes—not Jews who speak Greek, but men of Greek birth, who have embraced the Hebrew religion. They have come to worship at the Feast of the Passover. Perhaps they have witnessed the Triumphal Entry, or the expulsion of the traders from the Temple, and are anxious to have a closer knowledge of the wonderful person involved in these deeds. It has been suggested that the tradition of the embassy of

Abgarus of Edessa, who is said to have invited Jesus to return to his country, may have been founded on this occurrence. It is not impossible that the Greeks in this story actually intended to ask Jesus to visit their region. In any case they desired an interview with Him; they wished to lay their thoughts before Him. There may have been a deep spiritual purpose in their solicitude. "Sir, we would see Jesus," they say to Philip, giving to the disciple the deference which the Master merits. They probably appeal to Philip because his name is Greek, as is also that of Andrew, to whom he carries their message. As these two came from Bethsaida, if the Greeks were of that region, say Decapolis, local reasons may have induced them to apply to Philip, who, not wishing to assume the entire responsibility, gives Andrew an opportunity to exhibit anew his characteristic function of introducing them to Jesus. Compare i, 41; vi, 8, 9.

II. THE RESPONSE (23-33).

What Jesus is reported by John as saying on this occasion is not specifically directed to the Greeks, though it is unlike Jesus to ignore honest inquiry. Their petition made a deep impression on the mind of Christ, and He gave utterance to solemn thoughts which may have been heard by these Greeks as well as by the disciples and others who were near Him.

1. **The Address (23-26).** The coming of the Greeks at the close of Christ's public ministry, like the coming of the Magi at the time of His birth, brings the Gentile world into our Lord's view. The consciousness of His relation to this world has been more or less obscure until now. "The hour is come"—the fatal hour—"that the Son of man should be glorified." It has come not only to Him, but to the world at large, and to the Jews in particular. He sees Himself in the future exerting His sovereignty over a wide spiritual domain. But to enter into this realm He must pass out of His present sphere. Death is the means by which this will be accomplished. The

cross throws its shadow upon His pathway. But this is in accordance with the great principle, that the nobler life can only be attained by the loss of that which precedes it. This He illustrates by the corn of wheat which must fall into the ground and perish before it can produce fruitage (24). This principle He applies to Himself, and then makes it the governing test of discipleship (25, 26).

2. **The Soliloquy (27, 28).** The hearers are for the moment apparently forgotten as Christ falls into profound reflection upon the crisis which now confronts Him. His prayer suggests the agony of Gethsemane (Matt. xxvi, 39). There is the conflict of nature in the prospect of death with the great motive which has actuated His whole life. Shall He pray to be delivered from this awful trial? Nay, for this purpose He came to this hour. He will pray, "Father, glorify Thy name." Thus, while John omits the agony in the garden, which the Synoptists relate, He gives us to see by this agitation in the soul of Jesus that the agony was a part of His whole life.

3. **The Heavenly Voice (28, 29).** The soliloquy of Jesus is interrupted by a response from heaven. At the close of Christ's public ministry the Father seals His mission by this audible authentication, as had been done at His baptism and at the transfiguration. Those who hear it report it according to the degree of their spiritual intelligence. To some it is an inarticulate sound like that of thunder, to others the undistinguishable message of an angel.

4. **The Address Resumed (30-33).** Jesus affirms that He did not need this voice for His encouragement, since He has resources of strength and comfort within Himself; it was given for them. The hour of judgment had come for the world. The prince of the world would now suffer defeat. The approaching cross would not only be a judgment of the world's iniquity, but also a sign of Satan's de-

feat. He would no longer attract men by His words and works merely; He would draw them to Him from every quarter of the world by His sacrifice on Calvary. His death would accomplish what His life could never attain.

III. THE WARNING (34-36).

The people who have heard these impressive words now ask a question. Jesus has applied the title Son of man to Himself in such relations that they can not doubt He means thereby to designate the Messiah. How does He reconcile this with the teaching of the law, by which they mean the Old Testament generally, which affirms that the Christ shall abide forever? Who is this Son of man? They do not see that their interpretation of the Scriptures may be at fault. A suffering and perishing Messiah is not desired by them.

Jesus makes no direct reply to their ignorant or contemptuous question, but warns them that this is the decisive hour for them. While they have the light, let them walk in it. The darkness will come when the Christ is withdrawn. This prophetic word has been fulfilled. In the apostolic period a few of their number accepted the gospel, but the nation declined from the truth, and the light was removed to the Gentiles. "While ye have the light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light"—this is Christ's last warning to His generation.

Hymn No. 143.

In the cross of Christ I glory,
Towering o'er the wrecks of time;
All the light of sacred story
Gathers round its head sublime.

John Bowring.

Personal Questions:

1. Do I feel the magnetism of the Cross?
2. Does the light of its sacred story illumine my soul?

The Center of Gravity.

"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me."—JOHN xii, 32.

When the coronation ceremonies of Rudolph of Hapsburgh were in progress it was discovered that in the hurry no scepter had been provided. Thereupon the king seized a crucifix and exclaimed, "This shall be my scepter!" From the days of the Apostle Paul until now it has been the policy of successful preachers of the gospel to make the Cross the scepter of their authority, and they have found that, like the rod which Moses carried, it has always been their most effective instrument when marvels were to be wrought. "We preach Christ crucified," is the watchword of the triumphant evangelist in every generation. At the opening of one of his campaigns in England, Dwight L. Moody invited the London clergy to meet him in Freemason's Hall. Various questions were propounded, and among others he was asked, "Would it not be well for you to print your views of the Gospel, that we might know them?" He replied, "They are already in print; you will find them in the fifty-third of Isaiah." The doctrine of sacrifice foreshadowed in this message of the Prophet-Evangelist, and embodied in the atoning death of Jesus Christ, must ever be the central theme of Christian preaching, both because it lies at the very heart of the gospel, and also because it is the most persuasive theme which can be employed to influence the souls of men toward the Savior of mankind.

A theory of the atonement entirely satisfactory to every mind is probably impossible of construction, but the power of Christ's sacrifice to win men to His standard will be understood by the humblest intelligences. In the establishment of His spiritual sovereignty over humanity, it was necessary that He should possess extraordinary elements of attractiveness. This has always

been an indispensable requisite for successful leadership in any field, and has been strikingly exemplified in the lives of military captains.

It was remarked of the Duke of Wellington, as also of other great soldiers, that his presence on a field of battle was equivalent to the addition of many regiments. The general who had never lost a contest was certain to be an inspiring figure whenever he appeared among his troops. What a tribute to the personal charm of Napoleon Bonaparte is found in the fact that when he escaped from Elba, whither he had been exiled after his first abdication, he had no sooner landed at Cannes with a mere handful of men, and was known to be proceeding toward Paris, than he was joined by great companies of his old soldiers, who quickly forgot their allegiance to the king in their idolatrous affection for their former master. Whole battalions passed over to his side the moment they caught sight of his familiar face and figure, and enabled him in a few days to enter the capital and assume control of the army once more. Doubtless the attractiveness of such a personality is due to the appeal which he makes to the love of valor and the passion for conquest which dwell in the bosoms of men. While Jesus was not to be the captain of a carnal force, He was to lead men to the noblest triumphs of all time, and to qualify Him for this high calling it was of the largest importance that He be able to command the attention and compel the admiration of those who love heroism. A philosopher or a teacher could not have gained such a place in the affections of men by pursuing the peaceful habits common to a quiet vocation. His influence would have been confined to the scholarly and the thoughtful. The throng would have passed Him by as unsuited to their needs. But the sacrificial element in the life of Jesus arrests the interest of all men.

Suffering provides the opportunity for such an exhibition of heroism as invariably evokes the admiration of the world, despite the selfishness which so widely per-

vades the race. It has been remarked that the history of nations is only most attractive when it depicts trial and struggle. Prosperity affords no medium for stirring recital. The disasters which overthrew Babylon, Nineveh, Greece, and Rome invest their stories with a solemn grandeur which captivates the imagination of all readers. The brave resistance which the Netherlands offered to the pitiless cruelty of Philip II of Spain makes the narrative of her people's development vastly more interesting than the records of a mercantile nation attaining unparalleled wealth through undisturbed avenues of trade.

In the same way the biographies of individuals are effective with the average mind in proportion to the tragic features which they contain. Thousands of persons who could not repeat a single moral precept or philosophical observation of Socrates are thoroughly acquainted with the circumstances of his death, and have wept tears of pity as in imagination they have witnessed him drinking the cup of poison in his prison, and bidding a long farewell to his companions. It is altogether probable that the Sermon on the Mount and the Parables of the New Testament would possess a much smaller interest for the majority of mankind if they had not been spoken by one who gave His life in support of His teaching. We may reverently suppose that Jesus welcomed His cross with joy as He foresaw the impression which the spectacle of His sublime sacrifice would make upon even degraded and profligate men. It was the masterstroke of Divine wisdom. If that could fail to break the stony hearts of impenitent men, nothing which the human mind can conceive would be capable of doing it. In the light of this fact we may understand the words of the Epistle to the Hebrews: "It became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." Perfect in character He was by the very fact of His divine-human nature. Perfect in His ability to draw all men unto Him He could not be without His sacrifice for the weal of humanity.

But the mere fact of suffering is not enough to make a man attractive to his fellows. The criminal wearing out his days in durance vile or expiating his crimes on the gallows commands our pity, but not our respect. The merchant failing through bad ventures or mismanagement awakens our sympathy, but not our admiration. Even voluntary sacrifice may be made for unworthy ends. Empedocles leaping into the mouth of burning Ætna to secure enduring fame is not an imposing figure. But when a man for a high purpose, like the salvation of human life, or the defense of a great nation, deliberately consigns himself to hardship and death, his suffering rises to the height of sublimity and makes him a magnet of irresistible attraction. It is such a motive which imparts a certain grandeur of character to even unholy men who risk their lives for the safety of others. A New York policeman was taking a burly ruffian down Broadway to prison. The man's hands were manacled, and he was proceeding quietly, when suddenly he broke away from the officer, and before anything could be done had rescued a child from death under the wheels of a car which was rushing madly down the street. Then he came back to the policeman, and walked submissively on to his place of confinement. The latent goodness of the criminal had a momentary outbreak, and made him a hero for the instant.

The only black man who wears the Victoria Cross, which is given for valor without regard to rank, and is never denied the humblest soldier who has performed a deed worthy of it, is a hero named Gordon, a negro in the West Indies. He was sent to West Africa for one of the petty wars of Great Britain with the barbarous chiefs of that region. As the British forces were marching through the bush one day Gordon saw the barrel of a gun peeping out and covering the body of his commanding officer. He did the only thing by which the officer could be saved—threw his arms around him, and swung him about so as to interpose his own body between the officer and the gun. In a second the bullet sped through Gordon's body, piercing his lungs and stretching him on the earth for dead. But the hero

recovered, and now wears the distinction which titled nobility might well covet. Character is thus glorified by sufferings endured or perils undergone for the sake of others. Christ dies on a cross, that He may lift His enemies as well as His friends out of perdition into paradise, out of sin into holiness, and forthwith He becomes the most dominant personality in the range of history. The artists find His career the most powerful subject upon which to exercise their genius, the writers are forever telling His story in one fashion or another, the musicians have discovered no other theme to compare with Him for inspiration and effectiveness. The blasphemy of His name is esteemed the most hideous profanity that can befoul the lips of man. The Pharisees were scarcely extravagant when they said despondently, "Behold, the world is gone after Him!"

When it becomes evident to men that it is God who is thus suffering in their behalf, the power of Christ to attract them is intensified to the highest degree. Cæsar stabbed in the Capitol will awaken profounder interest than the woes of a hundred regiments of common soldiers. A great ruler dying in his palace occupies more space in the newspapers and more room in public thought than the overthrow of a city. Think of God enduring the buffetings of the mob and the shameful death of the cross! Once let that conception take hold upon the mind and heart, and its grasp will be unrelaxing. We know that Jesus was more than a national hero, killed because of His devotion to principles to which He had committed Himself. We are not moved by any other story of martyrdom as we are stirred by the narrative of His sacrifice. For He gives Himself to the divine task of saving men from sin, that deadly malady which infects the whole race. The tragedy of Calvary is to avert the tragedy of a lost world. If a man throws himself into the river, and imperils his life, saying as he takes the plunge, "I do this to express my love for you!" he impresses me only with his rashness and ineffectiveness. But if when I am being swept to death by the submerging current, I

see him leaping to my rescue, and hear him shouting, "Be of good courage, I will save you!" I need no evidence of his affection other than this, and I hail him as the preserver of my life. It is this which gives Jesus Christ His power over humanity. We know that sin is destroying us, we know that we can not throw off its curse without Divine help. We know that Christ is God manifest in the flesh to save us, and we surrender to His love with glad hearts.

Yet the drawing of the cross is not irresistible. The human will can withstand its magnetism. Man has the sovereign right of choice. It is a frightful responsibility, but he can so insulate himself by worldliness that he will not be sensible of the attraction of Christ. He can remove himself so far away from the love of Christ by willful dedication to sin and shame, that he will no longer gravitate toward God. As there lies a point between this earth and each of the other planets, beyond which the pull of gravity is away from the earth and not toward it, so there is a point far on toward perdition, where the love of Christ no longer constrains men to seek His fellowship, but where men call evil their good, and see no charm in the godly life. But they who desire salvation, when they behold Christ's passion for the deliverance of humanity, cry out with fervent lips,

"Nay, but I yield, I yield;
I can hold out no more:
I sink by dying love compelled,
And own Thee conqueror.

XXVI.

THE FINAL JUDGMENT.

CHAPTER XII. 36-50.

The relation that John bears to Christ resembles that of Plato to Socrates; he is emphatically the philosophical evangelist.—*Harman.*

End of the Public Ministry (36).

HAVING concluded the address given in the preceding passage, Jesus withdraws from public view, and does not reappear, though the people await Him in the temple on the following day (Luke xxi, 38). John does not specify the location of His retreat, though it was probably Bethany. Ample opportunity had been afforded the people for belief, both by the works of Jesus, which they had witnessed, and also by His words, to which they had listened. Though He now hides Himself it is not of His own choice, but through the compulsion of His adversaries. It is their lack of faith which really obscures Him both physically and spiritually. They have turned from the Light, and the Light has vanished. They have lapsed into total moral darkness. Now, at the end of Christ's public ministry, judgment is recorded against these unbelievers, first, in the words of the author of this gospel, and then in the words of Christ Himself.

I. THE JUDGMENT OF JOHN (27-43).

1. **Persistent Unbelief (37).** Despite the many miracles Jesus has performed, the Jews reject His claims. Only seven of these "signs" are given in John's narrative, but these are typical of the rest, which He declares in several places, and particularly

at the close of his book (xx, 30; xxi, 25), have been very numerous. The Jews have been compelled to acknowledge that these are true miracles, for they have been wrought "before them"—in their very presence. Nevertheless, though without any excuse to justify their unbelief, they have refused to commit themselves to Christ.

2. **The Cause of Unbelief (38-41).** The fulfillment of prophecy is manifest in their unbelief. Compare Isa. liii, 1. History repeats itself in their present rejection of Christ. As their ancestors repudiated the message of the prophet-evangelist, so they have scouted the revelation of the Messiah Himself. By their persistent unbelief they had rendered themselves incapable of belief. This is described as if it were the result of divine pre-determination (39, 40). As God is the ordainer of the laws under which the forces of life operate, He is in this sense responsible for the evil as well as the good in human conduct. As a matter of fact the moral insensibility of these Jews was due to their own willful unbelief steadily maintained in the face of the most convincing proofs of Christ's divinity. It was the result of that inexorable law by which the continued refusal to obey the dictates of conscience finally renders the conscience impervious to moral appeals. God's announcement that an event will occur does not produce the event. He proclaims it *because* it will occur. Things which are in the future, as reckoned by human calculations, are viewed by Him as already existing. The Jews, therefore, were not doomed to blindness by an arbitrary act of the divine will, irrespective of their characters and right of choice; they were doomed solely on the basis of God's knowledge that they would make the fatal choice. Nevertheless, as the processes of nature are according to laws which God has fixed, it is legitimate to say, "He hath blinded," etc. (40; compare Isa. vi, 9). This explains also the meaning of

the statement often repeated in the book of Exodus, that God hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and the declaration of Paul regarding the heathen, "God gave them over to a reprobate mind" (Rom. i, 28). Isaiah uttered his judgment against the Jews when he beheld the glory of the Son before His incarnation (Isa. vi, 1). The revelation of the Son in the flesh brought the unbelief of the nation to its predicted consummation.

3. **Exceptions to the General Unbelief (42, 43).** Apparently there were some who believed even among the rulers of the Jews. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus are probable examples. Doubtless there were others who did not show confidence in Jesus to such an extent as these men. Yet they yielded a certain intellectual assent to His claims. They did not, however, openly confess their faith in Him, and hence their belief was fatally defective. They feared excommunication. They were not brave enough to risk the contempt of men for the favor of God. Hence they were in no better condition than those who stoutly avowed their unbelief. (Compare v. 41-44.)

II. THE JUDGMENT OF JESUS (44-50).

While this passage is phrased in the direct manner characteristic of John, it is hardly probable that Jesus uttered the words which follow as a separate discourse on this particular occasion, for in verse 36 it is plainly indicated that Jesus had ended His public ministry. This is rather a convenient epitome of teachings formerly delivered. In fact, all the thoughts expressed herein may be found in utterances previously delivered by our Lord as recorded in this gospel.

1. **The Believer (44-46).** Belief in the Son is really belief in the Father. This belief is the ground of eternal life. Christ's significance as a person lies in the fact that He is sent by the Father, that He

is the manifestation of the Father. In beholding Him, they behold the Father. In receiving Him they receive the Father. In His light they rejoice in the Divine light. The judgment on the world is that it lieth in darkness. The judgment on believers is that they walk in the light.

2. **The Unbeliever (47-49).** Judgment need not be formally pronounced by Jesus on the unbeliever. He who rejects Christ's message rejects the Father. He is, therefore, self-judged. Jesus did not come into the world to pronounce judgment, but to bring salvation. Nevertheless, His coming results in judgment. The message and mission of Jesus which unbelievers repudiate will stand against them in the last day. It is God's word and work they scorn. They have turned away from Him.

3. **The Ultimatum (50).** Whether men accept or reject God's commandment, it alone brings eternal life. The mission of Christ is the expression of that commandment. Christ asserts this: "Even as the Father said unto Me, so I speak." A final statement of what He has constantly declared.

Hymn No. 248.

Hasten, sinner, to be wise!
Stay not for to-morrow's sun;
Wisdom, if thou still despise,
Harder is it to be won.

—*Thomas Scott.*

Personal Questions:

1. Do I realize the danger of cultivating the "evil heart of unbelief?"
2. Have I dared openly to confess my belief in Christ?
3. Have I placed wordly popularity above divine favor?

The Cause of Unbelief.

"They loved the praise of men more than the praise of God."—JOHN xii, 43.

When Cassius was seeking to incite Brutus against Julius Cæsar, he is represented by Shakespeare as undertaking to show him that homage to the master of Rome was nothing short of ignoble self-abasement.

> "I can not tell what you and other men
> Think of this life; but for my single self
> I had as lief not be, as live to be
> In awe of such a thing as I myself."

This sentiment, apart from the spirit which animated the man who uttered it, is worthy of all acceptation, but it was not shared by certain prominent persons in Christ's day, and is not expressed in the conduct of thousands of people in this generation. John says that, despite the many wonderful works Jesus had wrought before the very eyes of the Jews, "they believed not on Him," that is, the nation as a whole did not receive Him. Nevertheless, there were notable exceptions, for "even among the chief rulers many believed on Him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue." They had a very sensitive regard for the jealous guardians of orthodoxy, and a very serious dread of excommunication. The common people were under the spell of the same deference for authority. Popular opinion took its form and color from the judgments of the Pharisees. If these lordly tyrants of the conscience saw any symptoms of belief in Jesus on the part of the populace, they would instantly crush the budding faith under the threat of persecution. For the people who were victims of this policy of repression one can feel a measure of pity, but for the rulers who timorously yielded to it one must have a kind of scorn, for they ought to have been strong enough to brave the enmity of the Pharisees. But John's

verdict concerning them is true: "They loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." Doubtless this could also be said with equal propriety of the common people in large numbers, and unfortunately it can be applied to multitudes in our own time, who substitute worldly favor for divine approbation.

It is related of a great financier, one of the Frankfort Rothschilds, that whenever he was in doubt on a matter of business he would turn to his chief clerk and say: "Herr Meyer, pray tell me, what are my principles to-day with regard to American hides?"—or whatever the interest under discussion might chance to be. What a host of souls take their rule of life in this fashion at the hands of others! If they confined themselves to those concerns which affect commercial life alone the result would not be so alarming, but sadly enough they confer with flesh and blood regarding the deeper questions of character, and submit their spiritual convictions to the judgment of the world.

Under such circumstances unbelief is seen to be not a matter of the mind, but of the will. Jesus plainly declared that the evidence of His right to be called the Son of God was so ample that any man who was willing to acknowledge Him as Lord, would find no difficulty in doing so. And John's avowed purpose in writing his gospel was so to mass the testimony of every kind in support of Christ's divinity that the dullest mind could not escape the conviction that only through faith in Him was eternal life to be secured. Jesus told the influential Jews who were seeking His destruction that their unbelief had a moral and not an intellectual root. "I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you. I am come in My Father's name, and ye receive Me not. If another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive. How can ye believe which receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that cometh from God only?" (John v, 42-44.) While they had an itch for human applause it was impossible for them to put a true valu-

ation on the favor of God. If Jesus had come as a leader of conventional religious thought, if He had adjusted Himself to the worldly policy of the Jews, if He had sought to ingratiate Himself into their favor by adopting their carnal program, then He would have been received with enthusiasm. But the pure spirituality He taught was offensive to their tastes. "They loved the praise of men more than the praise of God."

Macaulay tells of a rich Brahman who saw a drop of water from the sacred Ganges under the microscope. The revelations thus made to him were so appalling that he bought the instrument and dashed it to atoms, that it might never again rebuke his superstitious practices. It was with a similar motive that these Jews pursued Jesus until they accomplished His death. So long as He remained in their presence He was a perpetual judgment upon their dishonest lives. They could only rid their consciences of the constant reminder of their faithlessness by removing Him from the world. Actuated by this purpose, their moral sense steadily lost its quickening power, and finally their spiritual perceptions were so blunted that they saw no beauty in Him who was the "light of the world." That was character-suicide, and it illustrates a process that is continually going on in society to-day. Men turn aside from Jesus Christ because He apparently opposes their personal interests. He makes a demand upon them which they are not willing to grant. They prefer worldly satisfactions to Christian discipleship, and at length they lose all zest for spiritual religion, and dwindle into moral insensibility.

There exists no formal body of Pharisees in our day to sit in judgment on the religious feelings of the people. In their place, however, and exerting an equally baneful influence, is the spirit of worldliness, which so plainly characterizes the age in which we live. There is no question but that this temper is foreign to the interests of religion. "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world."

An undue deference to public opinion marks those who "love the praise of men more than the praise of God." This is an exhibition of feeble judgment. It supposes that society is wiser than the individuals which compose it. The truth is that people in the mass are generally inferior in understanding and in character to the same persons taken singly. The chemist combines ingredients which are innocuous in themselves into a compound which is deadly in its effect upon the human system. A number of fairly wise people when thrown together become capable of great folly. The mob is a very dangerous thing. Public opinion is often only the speech of the demagogue transferred to the lips of the people. In any case it simply represents average conventional ideas, which frequently occupy a low level of intelligence.

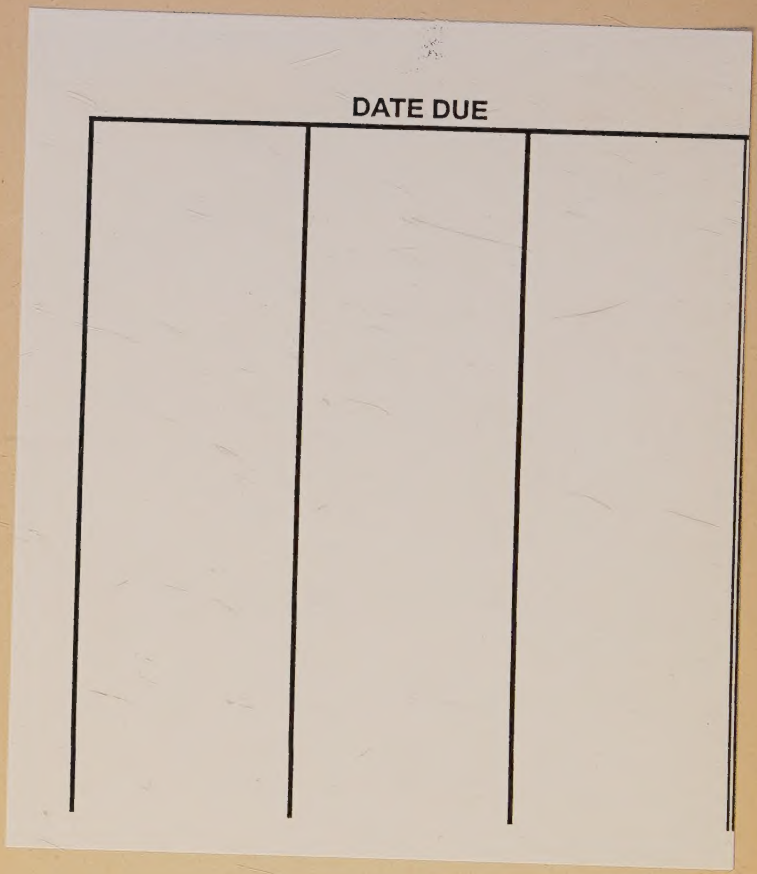
Charles James Fox, the English statesmen, would often say, when a public measure was under discussion, "I wonder what Lord B—— will think of this." Now Lord B—— happened to be a very stupid person, and Fox's friends were curious to know why he attached so much importance to the opinion of such an ordinary individual. "His opinion," said Mr. Fox, "is of much more importance than you are aware of. He is an exact representative of all commonplace English prejudices, and what Lord B—— thinks of any measure, the great majority of English people will think of it." It is shrewdness in the politician to heed the popular sentiment in order to serve his own ends, but it is folly in those who desire a rule of conduct to look for it in the dictates of public opinion. The people and their leaders have often been astray, and society would soon drift into hopeless incapacity, if it were not for the benevolent interference of men who think for themselves, and who are at constant variance with public opinion.

To regulate one's religious life by the customs of the world—another species of unwholesome regard for commonplace popular judgment—is the superlative degree of foolishness. The rulers in Christ's day, who were deterred from espousing His cause openly by the fear of Pharisaic enmity, were guilty of this moral weakness;

and those who refrain from an earnest devotion to Christian principles in this age, because they dread the flippant criticism of worldlings, are victims of the same sinful timidity. "They love the praise of men more than the praise of God." They have a higher respect for temporal glory than for eternal riches. The exhortation of St. Paul is the true prescription for such a malady: "Be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God."

Alexander Hamilton is credited with this noble sentiment: "I would willingly risk my life, but not my character, to exalt my station." There are too few persons among us who are inspired by such a lofty principle. An eagerness for personal popularity destroys the sense of relative values in many minds. The youth is ruined in college because he sets a higher estimate on being dubbed a good fellow than on achieving scholarship. He dishonors himself in business by surrendering moral integrity to the aspiration to be considered brilliant and the purpose to become rich. He weighs every action in the scales of self-interest. Demetrius, the silversmith, who saw his business of making shrines for Diana going to pieces under the preaching of the gospel, cried out to his fellow-workmen, "This our craft is in danger to be set at nought!" In a like spirit men to-day often protest that religion must not be allowed to interfere in commerce, and for the sake of temporal success yield their hold upon moral character. In order to secure social eminence or political emoluments others will sacrifice every virtue and stifle every prompting of conscience. "They love the praise of men more than the praise of God." Jesus spoke sage words to His disciples when He said: "Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you, for so did their fathers to the false prophets." His admonition is needed now as then, not only for the leaders of religion, but for all who seek the highest good.

In the early years of his public life Franklin Pierce was addicted to habits of dissipation. During this period his career in Washington reflected no credit upon himself or his constituency. But under the influence of a faithful preacher of the gospel, who was at the time chaplain of the House of Representatives, and to whose ministry Franklin Pierce was powerfully attracted, he was brought to see the sinfulness of his life, and to enter upon an earnest religious experience. To the great surprise of every one he soon resigned his seat in the Senate, and retired to private life in Concord, New Hampshire, where for several months he exhibited a most ardent Christian spirit. At length, however, he drifted back into a more easy-going method of living, though he never sank again into the evil practices of former days. His reason for resigning his place in the Senate was the subject of much inquiry, and was never thoroughly understood by his associates; but he declared to a clergyman in Concord that he had withdrawn from political life in order to enter the ministry. Until recently a man was living who had received this story directly from the person to whom Mr. Pierce had divulged his intentions. But the seductions of political preferment were too strong for him, and when the opportunity for national prominence came to him he yielded to the temptation of ambition. When he was nominated for the Presidency thousands of people in all parts of the country asked, "Who is Franklin Pierce?" and when the small impression he made as Chief Magistrate upon the life of the nation is remembered, it will not be thought strange if in future days the same question often rises to the lips of American citizens, "Who was Franklin Pierce?" Had he clung to the purpose conceived in his soul under the impulse of religious enthusiasm, he might have written his name in ineffaceable letters upon the characters of those whom he had won to Christ, and whose lives he had molded into strength and symmetry by the ministry of the truth. "What is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world and lose himself?"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